

April 20, 1994

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-94-019

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region IV staff on this date.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Sequoyah Fuels Corporation	Notification of Unusual Event
Sequoyah Fuels Corporation	Alert
P.O. Box 610	Site Area Emergency
Gore, Oklahoma	General Emergency
Dockets: 04008027 License No: SUB-1010	X Not Applicable

Subject: LIQUID LEAKAGE FROM DRUM DURING HIGHWAY SHIPMENT

The licensee reported that a liquid (likely to include water) was observed leaking from a drum of yellowcake onboard a truck bound from the licensee's facility at Gore, Oklahoma, to Metropolis, Illinois. Three trucks were hauling the yellowcake on Interstate 40 east of Forrest City, Arkansas, when one of the drivers noticed water leaking from a drum in the truck ahead of him. The trucks pulled off the highway, notified the licensee, and were awaiting the arrival of a licensee investigating team on Tuesday night.

The licensee reported the incident to the NRC Operations Center at 7:22 p.m. EDT, on Tuesday, April 19, 1994. The event time was stated to be approximately 4:00 p.m. CDT. Region IV received notification of this occurrence from the Operations Center immediately after the licensee's report.

Region IV has informed NMSS.

The states of Arkansas and Oklahoma were notified Tuesday night. The state of Arkansas dispatched a representative to the location of the incident. FEMA Region VI was also notified.

At 10:30 a.m. on April 20, 1994, licensee representatives provided a supplemental telephonic report to the Region IV office. According to information provided by the licensee, the licensee's investigation team arrived at the location of the incident at approximately 1:30 a.m. and met with the courier and representatives from the state of Arkansas. Surveys of the truck bed revealed no removable contamination and direct survey results were below the licensee's release limits for articles released for unrestricted use.

The drum suspected of leaking water was isolated and removed from the truck for surveys. During this movement, liquid was noted to escape from the seal around the drum lid. In order to investigate the source of the liquid, the licensee's representatives removed the drum lid and found approximately four inches of water on top of the solidified yellowcake,

9404270040 940420
PDR I&E
PNO-IV-94-019 PDR

260001

IE 34 / 10

with approximately two inches of air space above the water. It was suspected that this air space was previously water-filled. Dry cement compound was added to the drum in order to solidify the content and the drum was resealed and the surface cleaned. Surveys of the exterior surface of the drum revealed no contamination in excess of the licensee's release limits for either direct or removable contamination surveys.

Licensee representatives reported that they suspect that the water intrusion was the result of deterioration of the gasket around the drum lid and exposure to the environment over the period of years that the drums were stored outside at the licensee's facility. In addition, the licensee noted that it had washed the exterior of the drum by water spray in order to remove debris on several occasions in the past and that this also may have contributed to water accumulation in drums which were not tightly sealed.

State representatives present at the time indicated that they were satisfied with the survey results and the truck was released to continue its journey. The Arkansas State Health Department was notified of the survey results by telephone on the morning of April 20, 1994, and the licensee plans to provide a written report to both the Department of Transportation and the NRC.

Contact: Charles L. Cain
(817)860-8186

Linda L. Kasner
(817)860-8213