

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-82-72

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 I staff on this date.

Facility: UNKNOWN
WASHINGTON, DC

Licensee Emergency Classification:
____ Notification of Unusual Event
____ Alert
____ Site Area Emergency
____ General Emergency
 X Not Applicable

Subject: VIAL CONTAINING 5 MILLICURIES OF CHROMIUM-51 FOUND BY TEENAGERS

About 12:00 noon on November 16, 1982, two teenagers on their lunch break from Woodrow Wilson High School (Chesapeake and Nebraska Avenues) were walking on Wisconsin Avenue near 44th Street. They found a small lead pig labeled "New England Nuclear" (NEN) in the gutter. They returned to school, opened the pig and found that it contained a vial of liquid labeled "5 millicuries chromium-51." They apparently handled the vial for a short time before placing it in a school locker. About 4:00 p.m. they called NEN using the toll free telephone number on the pig. The NEN Radiation Safety Officer suggested they contact the school principle. The principle and the NEN Radiation Safety Officer jointly agreed that the fire department might be able to provide immediate assistance. While the principle was calling the fire department, NEN reported the matter to Region I about 4:30 p.m. Region I notified the State of Maryland and the District Of Columbia and requested assistance from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Radiation Safety Officer. The NIH Radiation Safety Officer visited the school, surveyed the pig, vial, and persons who had handled it and found no removable contamination. Based on NRC calculations, the upper limit of extremity exposure the teenagers could have received is 4 rem. Whole body dose would be substantively lower. The vial was left in the custody of the D.C. Bureau of Occupational and Institutional Hygiene. The D.C. Bomb Squad also responded. Region I will investigate the incident and perform a dose assessment and will attempt to determine the source of the material.

There has been no known media interest, however, media interest may occur because of the interest in radioactive material in the public domain. Region I does not plan to issue a press release.

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DISTRUBUTION:

H. St. _____ MNRB _____ Phillips 11:50 AM E/W _____ Willste _____ Mail: ADM:DMB
Chairman Palladino EDO _____ NRR _____ IE _____ NMSS _____ DOT: Trans. Only
Comm. Gilinsky PA _____ OIA _____ RES _____
Comm. Ahearne MPA _____ AEOJ _____
Comm. Roberts ELD _____
Comm. Asselstine _____
ACRS _____ Air Rights _____ INPO NA
SECY _____ SP _____ NSAC NA
CA _____
PDR _____ Regional Offices _____ TMI Resident Section 11:55 AM
RI Resident Office NA
Licensee: NA
(Reactor Licensees)

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