

February 7, 1991

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-91-03

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.

FACILITY: Georgia-Pacific
Ashdown, Arkansas
(Arkansas Agreement State Licensee)

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

SUBJECT: RADIATION EXPOSURE TO CONTRACT WORKERS FROM FIXED GAUGE

Region IV was notified on February 6, 1991, by the Arkansas Division of Radiation Control that a number of contract workers received some radiation exposure while performing welding operations on a digester tank for the licensee. In spite of procedures to the contrary, a fixed nuclear gauge (K-Ray with 5 curies of cesium-137) was left with the shutter in the open position for several days while contract welders worked in and around the tank. Both welders and QA personnel were involved in the work which was performed during a 10-day period at the end of January 1991.

Arkansas' inspectors were onsite on January 31, 1991, and are continuing their investigation of the incident. Preliminary information indicates that the beam of radiation from the gauge produced an exposure rate of up to 900 millirems per hour, and estimates of personnel exposure range from 400 to 6400 millirems. None of the contract workers were required to be badged; therefore, the State is calculating exposures based on reenactments of the incident.

There is no current media interest in the incident, and Region IV will await further reports from the Arkansas radiation control staff.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Arkansas Division of Radiation Control at 5 p.m., February 6, 1991. Region IV has informed SP and NMSS.

CONTACT: Robert J. Doda, FTS 728-8139.

DISTRIBUTION:

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|--|-------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| OWFN | | | NMSS | NMSS | NL | MAIL: DCS (Orig. IE34) |
| Chmn. Carr | CA | | | AEOD | RES | DOT (Transp. Only) |
| Comm. Rogers | OGC | | NRR | IRM | | |
| Comm. Curtiss | GPA | | SLITP | OIG | FAX: (5520: 2/7/91 @ 10:41) | |
| Comm. Remick | PA | | OE | | INPO | Regions & HQ) |
| ACRS | EDO | | | | PDR | |
| | | | | L-St | NSAC | |
| | | | | PDR | RRI | |
| | | | | EW-W | NRC OPS Ctr | |
| | | | | ASLAP | Licensee (Reactor) | |

RIV:SAO *df*
RJDoda;ap
2/7/91

RA *u*
RDMartin
2/7/91

1E34
0/1