

October 8, 1993

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-93-056

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 II staff on this date.

Facility

Department Of The Navy
Naval Medical Research Institute
Rockville annex
Rockville, Maryland

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
Alert
Site Area Emergency
General Emergency

Dockets: 03029462 License No: 45-23645-01NA X Not Applicable

Subject: P-32 CONTAMINATION EVENT

On October 8, 1993, the Navy Radiation Safety Committee advised Region II of a contamination event at the Naval Medical Research Institute's Rockville annex. The facility is located in a commercial/industrial complex at 12300 Washington Avenue, Rockville, MD. The contamination, involving an estimated 250 microcuries of phosphorus 32 (P-32), was initially discovered on October 7, 1993, during a routine survey in a research laboratory. Subsequent surveys have found localized areas of contamination throughout the facility. Reported contamination levels ranged from 43,000 to 80,000 disintegrations per minute (dpm) per 100 centimeters. Personnel surveys found three individuals with removable skin contamination, ranging from 430 to 1,750 dpm. The contaminated personnel were decontaminated to background levels. Contamination was also found on eight pairs of shoes that are being held at the facility. Surveys of sidewalks, loading docks and staff automobiles found no evidence of contamination.

The facility's staff has been sent home on administrative leave while naval personnel survey and decontaminate the facility. A senior Radiological Health Officer from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, is supervising these activities. The Naval Environmental Health Center is dispatching a team to investigate the event and to advise the Navy Radiation Safety Committee. The Navy Radiation Safety Committee is keeping RII advised. The Navy is preparing a press release if press interest should develop.

A member of the NRC/NMSS staff has been dispatched to the facility to monitor the licensee's activities. Region II will continue to follow the licensee's activities.

This information is current as of 2:00 p.m. on October 8, 1993.

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