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PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-94-44

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 III staff on this date.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Pneumo Abex Corporation Cleveland, Ohio	General Emergency Site Area Emergency Alert
Former Licensee	Unusual Event X Not Applicable

Subject: DISCOVERY OF CONTAMINATED EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL

On June 8, 1994, Region III (Chicago) was notified that on May 12, 1994, a shipment of metal from a facility owned by the Pneumo Abex Corporation was rejected by the Atlas Lederer Scrapyard after the truck carrying the metal caused the scrapyard's radiation detectors to alarm. The truck was found to contain nine magnesium-thorium alloy rings that were five feet in diameter. Laboratory analysis conducted indicates the rings contain 1.7 to 2.0 weight percent total thorium. Material containing greater than 0.05 percent thorium requires an NRC source material license. Radiation readings on the rings showed 1.8 millirem per hour (18 microsieverts per hour) on contact. NRC criteria requires that doses to members of the public from licensed operations should not exceed 2.0 millirem per hour in unrestricted areas.

Surveys of the building where the rings came from determined that a large welding machine was also contaminated. The maximum radiation level on the machine was a small area measuring 18,000 disintegrations per minute (dpm), which exceeds the NRC release criteria.

The rings, which were returned to Pneumo Abex, are being prepared by a contractor for disposal at a licensed disposal site. Planning is also underway for the decontamination of the welder. Within the past 12 months, Pneumo Abex sold the contents of the building to the B. F. Goodrich Company. Pneumo Abex and B. F. Goodrich are working together to properly characterize the extent of any contamination and contaminated material and ensure its proper disposal.

Pneumo Abex Corporation, under its former name of Cleveland Pneumatic Tool Company, held an NRC license for the possession and use of thorium. The license was terminated in 1972.

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NRC Region III will conduct an inspection of the facility on June 13, 1994, to review the circumstances surrounding this incident and to determine if additional licensable material or contamination exists at the site.

This information is current as of 2:00 p.m. on June 10, 1994.

CONTACT:

WCS for
William Snell
708/829-9871

WCS
Cary Shear
708/829-9876
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