

July 8, 1983

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-83-51A

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: George Hoover, Gold Refiner
(Non-licensee)
Richmond, Virginia

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

SUBJECT: AMERICIUM-241 DISCOVERED IN RECLAIMED GOLD (UPDATE)

This PN updates PNO-II-83-51, issued on July 5.

A Region II inspector measured the two most highly contaminated gold nuggets at the Virginia Health Department laboratory on July 7 and found dose rates of 0.1 and 0.5 millirads per hour, rather than 30 and 150 millirads per hour, as had been erroneously reported earlier to Region II.

The surface Am-241 content of the two nuggets is estimated to be 0.5 and 0.9 microcuries respectively. The removable contamination on the largest nugget was about 20,000 disintegrations per minute. Loose contamination was contained in disposable paper and gloves, which will be included in the subsequent shipment of the gold to a New York state licensee. No residual facility or personnel contamination remains. A Buffalo, New York, area Am-241 foil manufacturer, NRD Inc., has agreed to accept the three nuggets as manufacturing waste. The original consignor of this gold cannot be located by New York officials.

No media interest has occurred. Neither the NRC nor the Commonwealth of Virginia plans to issue a news release.

This information is current as of 4 p.m. (EDT) today.

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