

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE- PNO-I-91-90

* This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information has been confirmed by the licensee, and is basically all that is known by the Region I staff on the date.

Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power
Governor Hunt Road
Vernon, Vermont
Docket No. 50-271

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

Subject: FIRE INVOLVING TRUCK TRANSPORTING NEW FUEL TO A POWER REACTOR

At approximately 4:00 a.m. on December 16, 1991, a truck, traveling north on Interstate 91 in Springfield, Massachusetts carrying 12 shipping containers (24 fuel bundles) of unirradiated low enriched fuel, was struck head on by an automobile traveling south in the wrong lane. The truck was carrying the fuel from a General Electric facility in Wilmington, North Carolina to Vermont Yankee. The truck driver and his assistant were transported to a local hospital with minor injuries. The driver of the automobile was apparently uninjured. A fire ensued following the collision. All shipping containers were involved in the fire. As of 10:30 a.m. the fire was under control but still smoldering. Eight of the twelve shipping containers were on the highway next to the trailer. The remaining containers were on the trailer. Some of the shipping containers were observed to be slightly deformed. Radiological response members from Vermont Yankee and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts went to the scene and took alpha and beta-gamma radiation measurements using ion chambers, GM detectors and alpha detectors. Analysis of smears taken immediately around the accident scene and downwind revealed no contamination or elevated radiation levels. The type of container involved in the accident has been designed to withstand the conditions of the accident. An NRC resident inspector and an NRC transportation specialist/health physicist were also at the accident scene.

Preliminary plans are to transport the damaged shipping containers to a nearby safe haven where the containers will undergo a detailed inspection and will be repackaged for ultimate transport either back to the General Electric Company, Wilmington, North Carolina facility or to Vermont Yankee for further evaluation.

NRC inspectors plan to monitor the recovery of the shipping containers, their movement to the nearby safe haven, and the inspection and preparation for further transport.

The state police and local fire officials have set up a command and control center and are controlling access to the area.

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The NRC Operations Officer received notification of this occurrence by a telephone call from a General Electric official at 4:43 a.m. on December 16, 1991. NRC Headquarters, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the State of Vermont, FEMA-Region I, FEMA-Headquarters, DOT, and the DOE Radiological Assistance Program team have been notified.

The incident has resulted in the closing of I-91 in both directions and widespread media attention. Region I has responded to media inquiries.

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(Reactor Licensees)

Region I Form 83
(Rev. July 1991)

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