

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV

NRC Inspection Report: 50-272/84-24
50-311/84-24

Dockets: 50-272
50-311

Licensee: Public Service Electric and Gas Company
80 Park Place
Newark, New Jersey

Facility: Salem Nuclear Station

Inspection At: Rock Springs, Wyoming

Inspection Conducted: May 29, 1984

Inspector: R. J. Everett 6/18/84
R. J. Everett, Chief, Materials Radiation
Protection Section Date

Approved by: R. E. Hall 6/18/84
R. E. Hall, Chief, Technical Program Branch Date

Inspection Summary

Inspection Conducted on May 29, 1984 (Report: 50-272/84-24; 50-311/84-24)

Areas Inspected: Special, unannounced inspection of the circumstances surrounding a transportation accident near Rock Springs, Wyoming. Areas inspected included shipping documentation, waste packaging and shipment, and the licensee's handling of the accident at the scene. The inspection involved 15 inspector-hours onsite by one NRC inspector.

Results: Within the three areas inspected, no violations or deviations were identified.

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DETAILS1. Persons Contacted

- B. Hunkele, Radwaste Supervisor, Salem Nuclear Station, Public Service Electric and Gas Company
- D. Podoll, Safety Patrol Supervisor, Tri-State Motor Transit Company
- W. Matthews, Sweetwater County Fire Warden
- O. Tripp, Jr., Police Officer, Rock Springs Police Department

2. Chronology Of Events

On May 28, 1984, at approximately 9:00 a.m., EDT, the NRC Headquarters Duty Officer was notified of a transportation accident near Rock Springs, Wyoming. At approximately 5:12 a.m., MDT, a semi-truck transporting 1650 cubic feet of dry, solid waste from Salem Nuclear Station to the Richland, Washington, burial ground overturned on Interstate 80, approximately 30 miles east of Rock Springs, Wyoming. The driver of the truck was treated at a local hospital and released.

Surveys by the responding Sweetwater County fire department, the local Sheriff's office, and the city of Rock Springs Police Department confirmed that there were no releases of contaminated materials from the trailer. The waste shipping officer from Salem was dispatched to the scene and was due to arrive at Rock Springs late the evening of May 28, 1984. Provisions were made to provide security for the damaged vehicle until an evaluation could be made by the responding individuals.

Region IV dispatched a health physicist to the scene on May 28, 1984, and he arrived at the scene at 7:30 a.m. on June 29, 1984.

3. Evaluation of Incident

The driver of trailer apparently lost control of the truck causing it to overturn on the highway median. The NRC and licensee representatives verified that no release of contaminated materials had occurred from the trailer and upon opening the trailer noted no apparent damage to the shipping containers. The DOT-7A containers were constructed of steel and were well constructed and sealed. These 8 foot containers contained about 3000 pounds each of compacted trash (low level radioactive waste). The containers were blocked and braced in place which prevented any significant movement during the accident. Each container had to be winched from the trailer by a auto wrecker. Wipes were taken on each container as it was removed to verify the absence of contamination. No leakage or contamination was found on any of the containers. The wipes were evaluated at the site using a portable survey meter and GM pancake probe.

Radiation levels on each container ranged from 2-60 mR/h at contact. The containers were loaded onto a flat bed trailer for transport into Rock Springs, and then to another transport vehicle. The wrecked trailer was surveyed for contamination and none was found. The trailer was released for public use at about 10:00 p.m. on May 29, 1984.

The NRC representative inspected the shipment against the DOT transportation requirements and no apparent violations were noted. Radiation levels, labeling, placarding, bracing, container integrity and shipping papers were reviewed at the scene. It was noted that the chemical form specified on the shipping papers was "depleted metal oxidizer." The NRC representative questioned the licensee as to the adequacy and descriptiveness of this nomenclature. The licensee responded that this was conventional nomenclature for compacted trash at the Salem Station.

No violations or deviations were identified.

4. Conclusions

The high strength containers and shipment bracing prevented any significant movement and loss of integrity during the accident. The local fire and police departments responded promptly and took necessary actions. Surveys were adequate to determine that material had not been lost from the trailer.

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