

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-84-77

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 I staff on this date.

Facility: Nuclear Radiation Developments
Grand Island, New York

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

Subject: RELEASE TO SANITARY SEWERS

The New York State Department of Health notified Region I on September 14, 1984 that they had detected americium-241 in sewage sludge at the Grand Island, NY sewage treatment plant. Three measurements were taken on one sewage sludge sample which showed americium-241 in concentrations of 110 ± 30 pCi/gm, 90 ± 20 pCi/gm and 100 ± 30 pCi/gm dry weight. (A guidance value of 30 pCi/gm has been established by NRC as an acceptable soil decontamination limit.)

The americium-241 is attributable to routine releases of material to the sanitary sewers by a Grand Island, NY company, Nuclear Radiation Developments, Inc., (NRD), a New York Agreement State licensee. NRD manufactures foils containing americium-241. The State has taken the following actions:

- (1) Obtained additional samples for analysis;
- (2) Obtained agreement of NRD to reduce future releases to the sanitary sewer system to Schedule 2 rather than Schedule 1 concentration limits allowed by the regulations (Schedule 2 concentration limits are a factor of 27 less than Schedule 1 limits);
- (3) Notified appropriate local, state, federal, legislative and Congressional representatives. (New York State plans to issue a press release) and;
- (4) Scheduled a meeting of State officials to determine an appropriate course of action.

A similar situation involving contamination of sewage sludge in Tonawanda, NY was identified by the State earlier this year involving the closure and decontamination of an americium-241 foil manufacturer, EAD Metallurgical, Inc. in Tonawanda.

Region I has offered to provide technical assistance should the State desire such assistance. The Offices of Inspection and Enforcement and Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards have been informed. The Office of State Programs has advised that it plans to inform other Agreement States of the occurrence.

CONTACT: Lohaus
488-1246

8409200034 840914
PDR I&E
PNO-I-84-077 PDR

LE:34

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