

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-92-18

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.

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| Facility: | Licensee Emergency Classification: |
| Limerick Nuclear Generating Station | <input type="checkbox"/> Notification of Unusual Event |
| Region I | <input type="checkbox"/> Alert |
| Docket Nos. 50-352/50-353 | <input type="checkbox"/> Site Area Emergency |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> General Emergency |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |

Subject: INTAKE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL AT A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

An intake of radioactive material by a radiation worker occurred at the Limerick Nuclear Generating Station on March 25, 1992. The intake was unusual in that it was estimated, on the basis of whole body counting, to be higher than that normally encountered at nuclear power plants, but it was still substantially below regulatory limits. Several root causes were identified by the licensee, including poor radiological practices, failure to follow procedural requirements, and poor communication between the work group and health physicists.

Because of the magnitude of the intake, the licensee immediately contacted a physician, and also initiated an excreta bioassay program for the worker. The preliminary results of the bioassay program, which became available recently, indicated a significant intake of alpha-emitting radionuclides, possibly of the order of 50 nCi. A bioassay result of this magnitude would indicate an intake above regulatory limits.

The alpha activity was detected in both the fecal and the urine samples. The licensee's routine alpha survey data had previously indicated that alpha contamination was not a concern on site due to the historically low levels of alpha contamination. Subsequent plant alpha survey data continue to show the very low alpha contamination levels normally observed on site.

The bioassay program is still ongoing, although most of the activity had been eliminated within the first two days following the intake. The identity of the alpha-emitting radionuclides in the bioassay samples is still being determined and is not known at this time. Final assessment of the intake in terms of 10 CFR Part 20 limits will await availability of this data.

The licensee is investigating the source of the alpha activity. The licensee's evaluation is ongoing at this time.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been notified.

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