

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

REGION III

IE Special Inspection Report No. 79-01

License No. STA-583

Category I

Priority III

Licensee: Kerr-McGee
West Chicago, IL

Inspection At: Licensee's Facility

Inspection Conducted: July 17, 1979

Inspectors:

R. E. Burgin
R. E. Burgin

7/25/79

J. J. Paperiello, for
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7/25/79

Approved By:

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7/25/79

Summary

Inspection conducted on July 17, 1979 (Report No. 79-01)

Inspection to ensure compliance with Immediate Action Letter dated July 26, 1976, concerning commitments required prior to initiation of decontamination operations at the West Chicago Facility.

DETAILS1. Introduction

On July 17, 1979, a special inspection was conducted of the Kerr-McGee Facility in West Chicago, Illinois. After a newspaper inquiry on the morning of July 17, 1979, the regional office wanted to ensure that the terms of an Immediate Action Letter dated July 26, 1976, were still being met. Under the terms of this letter, the plan and procedures for health physics coverage will be made available for review by the Region III office prior to the initiation of decontamination operations at the West Chicago facility.

2. Description of Event

The inspectors found that work was in progress when they arrived. Work was being performed by Chem Nuclear, Inc. under contract with Kerr-McGee. The contractor characterized the work as cleaning up "clean" material and not decontamination. Contractor personnel stated that "clean" material was going to be moved from the facility into containers in the facility yard. The inspectors asked how the contractor knew that the material was uncontaminated. The contractor presented the results of previous surveys made by a second contractor sometime in the past for one work location. The contractor representative stated that he made no surveys himself and the only survey equipment on site were two instruments owned by Kerr-McGee. Since there was no electric power on site, laboratory instruments could not be set up.

Surveys made by the inspectors using NRC alpha survey instruments and the contractor's representative using a Kerr-McGee beta-gamma probe showing extensive contamination of the facility including an area where two contractor employees had been moving "clean" material. An NRC survey showed that the clean material surveyed was below de minimus levels. However in this work area there were wooden pallets with levels in the order of 1,000 - 10,000 DPM/100 cm². Barrels marked radioactive waste were stacked on these barrels. Numerous piles of white powder on the floor of the facility were noted while walking to the work area.

Work was also in progress in two other areas. A contractor was observed using a wire brush on rusted metal lockers. The contractor's representative stated that no survey had been made of the lockers prior to this operation. A small earth mover was being used to move wood that had fallen from a water tower.

The inspector noted that the contractor had posted a Form NRC-3 and had a manual of radiation protection procedures. Employees had been provided with whole body dosimeters. The inspectors, upon questioning the two employees who had been moving "clean" material in the facility where the radioactive waste barrels were stored, found that they were locally hired part-time employees. They had been given no training in radiation protection. They had only been told that there was some radioactive material around the building.

The contractor's representative stated that the temporary employees had been given no radiation protection training. The only individuals on site with training were the three full time contractor employees supervising the work. The inspectors stated that failure to train the temporary employees according to the requirements of 10 CFR 19.12 was an item of noncompliance.

3. Conclusion

The inspectors discussed the results of this inspection with the contractor's representatives and the licensee's representative at the site. They stated that all work in the facility must stop until employees were trained and a decontamination plan is approved by the NRC. In response to a question, the NRC inspectors stated that "clean" material could not be moved since no surveys were being made of the material to ensure it in fact was clean. Furthermore, the inspectors stated that the surveys to be performed had to be described in the decontamination plan. The contractor's representatives and the licensee's representatives agreed to stop all activities in the contaminated facility as requested by the inspectors and confine activity to the garage which the NRC survey had shown was below de minimus levels.