

December 23, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-96-095

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 Region I staff in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

Facility

Department Of Health And Human Svcs  
National Institutes Of Health  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892  
Dockets: 03001786 License No: 1900296-10

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event  
Alert  
Site Area Emergency  
General Emergency  
X Not Applicable

Subject: FIRE IN POSTED RADIOACTIVE LABORATORY

The licensee informed the NRC Region I via FAX on Sunday, December 22, 1996, that a fire occurred in one of the NIH laboratories on December 21, 1996. The laboratory contained small quantities of radioactive materials used in research tracer studies. The laboratory also contained dry and liquid radioactive waste containers. The offsite laboratory is located at 12441 Parklawn Drive, Rockville.

The fire was discovered at approximately 8:15 a.m. Saturday, December 21, and reportedly was quickly controlled. Although significant damage occurred to the laboratory, there was no involvement of any licensed radioactive material. Contrary to reports in the press of possible contamination, there was no reported personnel contamination to any member of the licensee, the public, fire department or Haz-Mat Team personnel. Health physicists from NIH responded immediately and following surveys performed throughout the response, reported no contamination of the area or personnel, and no radioactive releases to the environment.

The State of Maryland and the District of Columbia were notified.

This PN is current as of 10:00 a.m., December 23, 1996. Region I Public Affairs is prepared to respond to media inquiries.

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