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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 III staff on this date.

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Facility: American Telephone & Telegraph
Technology Systems
Lee's Summit, Missouri

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

License No. 24-06015-02

30-05097

Subject: RELEASE OF GASEOUS KRYPTON-85

At about 9 a.m. on March 17, 1988, a vacuum pump on a testing device containing krypton-85 "blew up," allowing up to 50 curies of the radioactive gas to be released to the environment through an exhaust vent.

The testing equipment utilizes the krypton-85 under pressure to detect small defects in electronic components. After being removed from the krypton-85 test unit, the components are surveyed to determine if the radioactive gas entered the component through a defect. After each testing procedure, a small amount of krypton-85 (about 25 millicuries) is normally released through the equipment's vent system. The licensee has two testing devices and performs about 4500 test procedures a year for a calculated annual release of 113 curies.

There were no injuries. One employee had some minor contamination on his leg from krypton-85 contaminated oil from the damaged pump. The individual was successfully decontaminated. Film badges (radiation measuring devices) for the worker and others involved in the incident were being processed on an expedited basis, but no significant exposures are anticipated.

The licensee has retained a consultant who arrived on March 17, 1988. The consultant's initial review suggested that the release may be significantly less than the 50 curies originally thought to have been released. A total of about 135 curies of krypton-85 was in the testing system when the pump failed. Krypton-85 is a noble gas which would be principally an external radiation hazard and would not remain in the body if inhaled. The conditions of the release, including air mixing in the ventilation system, would present a minimal hazard at the facility boundary (estimated to be 1/4 mile from the release point.)

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An NRC radiation specialist was dispatched to the site on March 18, 1988, to review the circumstances of the accident and the licensee's response to it.

The State of Missouri has been notified.

The licensee notified Region III (Chicago) at 1 p.m. on March 17, 1988. This information is current as of 10 a.m., March 18, 1988.

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