

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
DIVISION OF COMPLIANCE, REGION IV
10395 WEST COLFAX, ROOM 200
DENVER, COLORADO 80215

CO Inquiry Report No.: 71-1

Subject: Western Nuclear, Inc.
Jeffrey City, Wyoming

Docket No.: 40-6787

License No.: SUA-582

Descriptive Title: Uranium Shipment Accident

A. Date and Manner AEC was Informed

On August 4, 1971, at 7:20 p.m., Mr. Herman J. Paas, Jr., of the Denver Regional Office, received a phone call from the Colorado State Patrol, Denver Dispatcher.

B. Description of Particular Event or Circumstance

The dispatcher stated that a truck carrying a radioactive shipment of yellowcake was involved in a ditching accident at 6364 North Washington Street, Denver, Colorado, and State Patrol, who were at the accident scene, wanted instructions, as one barrel was observed to be broken. The dispatcher (Miss Lapenne) was informed that the Colorado State Department of Health was the agency responsible for handling an accident of this type in Colorado. In response to Miss Lapenne's request, Mr. Paas volunteered to notify Mr. R. Siek, Chief, Radiation Hygiene Section, Colorado State Department of Health. Following inquiry as to what instructions to pass on to the patrolman at the accident scene, Mr. Paas stated that the area should be guarded to preclude any tracking or spread of the spilled material; based on the description, the direct radiation hazard was stated as being minimal and apparently not requisite of any other precautions. Mr. Siek was contacted at 7:25 p.m., and informed Mr. Paas that he and his personnel would proceed to the accident scene at once. Mr. Paas called Miss Lapenne, informing her that the State people had been contacted and were on their way to the scene. (Newspaper photo attached.) Mr. Paas contacted the Colorado State Department of Health (Mr. Montgomery) on the morning of August 5, 1971, for purposes of determining if any other followup actions on the part of the Denver Regional Office were required. Mr. Montgomery stated that the contents were reloaded

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on to another truck and this vehicle, along with the contaminated vehicle, were taken to the carrier's Denver depot. Western Nuclear, Inc., was notified of these actions by the State and the shipment now awaits arrival of Western Nuclear personnel who will complete decontamination and arrangements to forward the intact portion of the shipment.

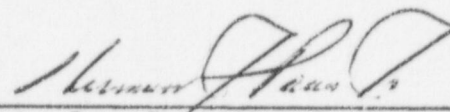
On August 6, 1971, Mr. Paas informed Mr. Steve Farkas, Coordinator Regional Radiological Assistance Team, National Reactor Testing Station, Idaho Falls, Idaho, of the facts summarized above. Considering the minimal hazard, negligible public relations problem and the effective actions of the Colorado State Department of Health, it was agreed that no further action on the part of the Radiological Assistance Team were needed.

C. Action by Licensee

At approximately 8:30 p.m., Mr. Bondie Tuverson, Radiation Safety Officer, Western Nuclear, Inc., Jeffrey City, Wyoming, called Mr. Paas regarding the accident. Mr. Tuverson stated that the shipment belonged to Western Nuclear and was in transport to the United Kingdom AEC, via the port of Baltimore, Maryland. He stated he was debating the need for sending a man to Denver for monitoring and cleanup purposes and asked advice in this request. Mr. Paas advised that he contact the Colorado State Department of Health (Mr. Siek) for updated information, and base his decision on the observations made at the accident scene. Mr. Tuverson stated he would take this course of action.

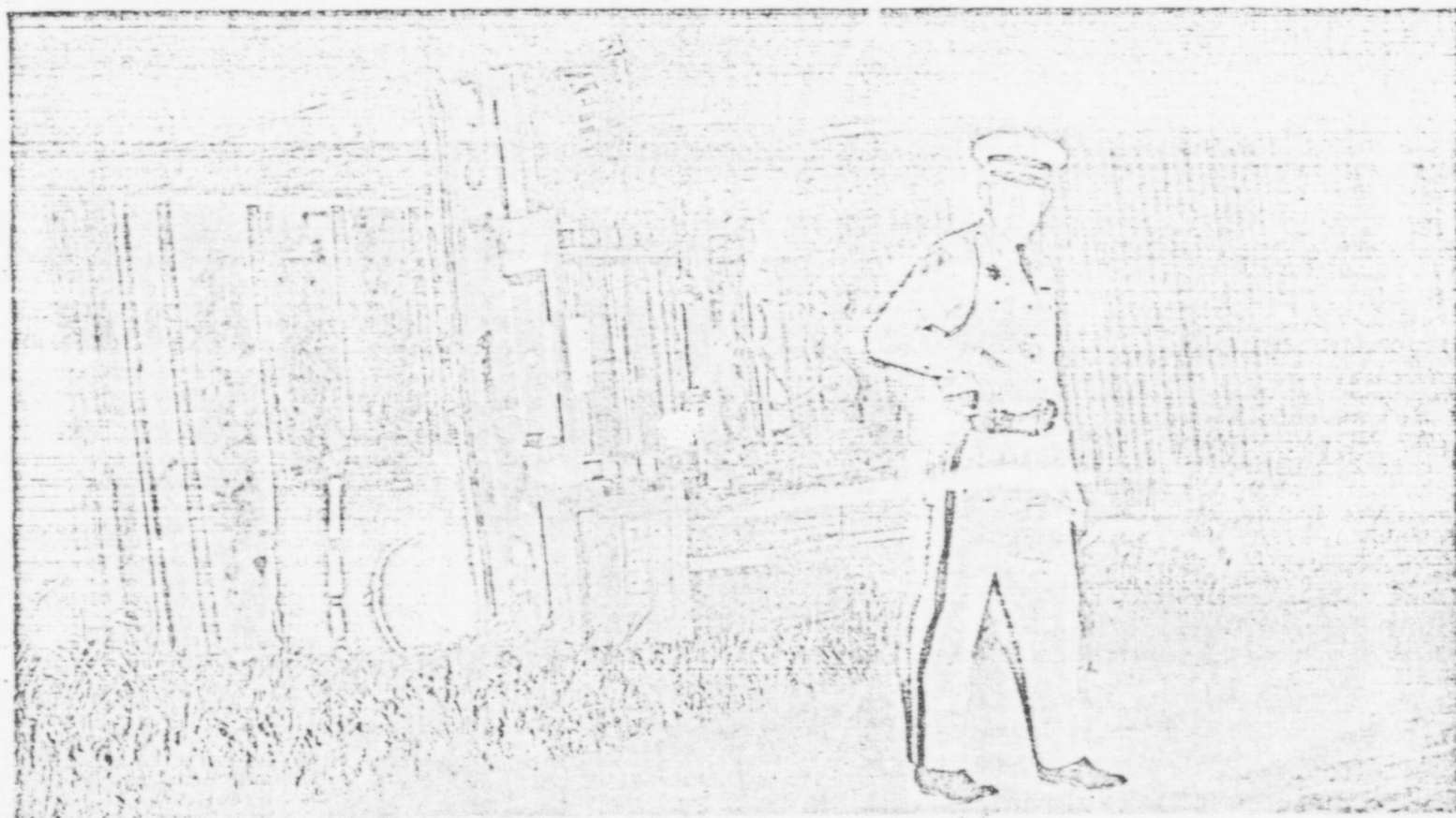
The Denver Regional Office plans no further action and considers the incident closed.

Prepared By:


Herman J. Paas, Jr., Radiation Specialist

8/6/71
Date

Attachment:
Newspaper photo



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS PHOTO BY TOM MCKINLAY

Colorado State Patrolman Victor Beeby walks around a truck loaded with 44 barrels of uranium

oxide which slid off the road into an irrigation ditch Wednesday night in Adams County.

A small amount of the black powder contained in the barrels spilled from one into the truck.

Truck overturns, spilling radioactive powder

A truck hauling 44 barrels of uranium oxide overturned Wednesday night at E. 63rd Avenue and Washington Street, Adams County, spilling a small amount of the black radioactive powder from one barrel.

Jim Montgomery, health physicist for the Colorado Health Department, said the 1,000-

pound barrel contained only 3 per cent to 5 per cent of uranium.

Uranium oxide is the concentrated matter produced when uranium ore is processed.

Montgomery said the truck, owned by the Yellow Freight Lines of Denver and driven by Don Birdsall, was parked on Washington Street

next to an irrigation ditch when the front wheels slid into the ditch.

Birdsall called a tow truck, but when the truck was being pulled out, it slide all the way into the ditch and overturned, Montgomery said.

A small portion of one of the 50-gallon barrels spilled inside the truck, but will not be dangerous to clean up, the health officials said.