

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-86-76

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.

Facility:

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland
L/N 30-6922
D/N 19-00296-12

Licensee Emergency Classification:

☐ Notification of Unusual Event
☐ Alert
☐ Site Area Emergency
☐ General Emergency
☒ Not Applicable

Subject: SPILL OF RADIOACTIVE WATER

About 2:45 p.m. on September 19, 1986 the Region I office received notification from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that a radioactive waste water holding tank had overflowed about 8:00 a.m. on September 19, 1986 resulting in the contamination of soil in a construction area.

NIH collects liquid water soluble radioactive waste from laboratories in carboys and pours it into one of two 10,000 gallon tanks near Building 21. The waste is held in the tanks for decay, mixed, assayed and discharged to the sanitary sewer. The tanks are interconnected and the level must be monitored using a dip stick. About 8:00 a.m. on September 1986 about 200 gallons of liquid waste was poured into one tank. Apparently both tanks were full and, due to incorrect monitoring, the second tank overflowed allowing about two hundred gallons of liquid to spill onto the ground. Radiation Safety staff detected the spill shortly after it occurred. The spill occurred in the locked restricted area, but the water ran under the fence into an adjacent fenced-in construction area which was locked and was not occupied at the time. The water

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*Kinneman
for Martin 9/19/86*

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