



United States
Enrichment Corporation

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2 Democracy Center
6903 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817

Tel: (301) 564-3200
Fax: (301) 564-3201

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United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attention: Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS) - Docket No. 70-7002 - Event Report 97-14

Pursuant to 10 CFR 95.25 (h), Enclosure 1 provides the required 30 day written Event Report (ER) for an event involving an unattended security container having classified matter found unlocked. Enclosure 2 is a list of commitments made in the report.

Should you require additional information regarding this event, please contact Scott Scholl at (614) 897-2373.

Sincerely,

Dale Allen
General Manager
Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant

D!A:SScholl:cw

cc: 170044
NRC Region III
C. Cox/D. Hartland, NRC Resident Inspectors, PORTS
NRC Division of Security

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United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
September 11, 1997
Page Two

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Event Report 97-14

Description of Event

Saturday, August 16, 1997, at 1625 hours, while conducting routine security checks in the X-344 Facility, Guard Force personnel discovered classified container 50010 unsecured in the office area. Upon finding the unsecured container, Guard Force personnel completed an "Open Safe Report," and attached the report to the container and secured the container. After securing the container the Plant Shift Superintendent (PSS) called off-site and notified the X-344 Section Manager of the discovery. The Section Manager reported to plantsite and along with the X-344 Front Line Manager (FLM) conducted a preliminary inspection of the container and determined nothing was missing.

At POKTS an unlocked security container found unattended constitutes a security infraction. Security containers are used to protect classified information. This subject container was located within the plantsite controlled access area. Personnel having access to the controlled area must have the appropriate access authorization level for entry or be under positive escort of a cleared employee. Due to these facts it is believed that no unauthorized access was gained to the container and no classified information or material was compromised. An unattended security container having classified matter found unlocked is reportable in accordance with 10 CFR 95.25 (h).

Monday, August 18, 1997, at approximately 0800 hours, the Security Section was notified of the incident. A Security Investigator responded to the X-344 Facility and conducted interviews with the Section Manager and an X-344 Clerical Support Employee. The clerical employee reported verifying and documenting the container was secured before leaving plantsite August 15, at approximately 2000 hours. The clerical employee then conducted a thorough inspection of the container confirming that no classified matter was missing.

On August 18, 1997, the X-344 Section Manager conducted interviews with custodians having access to the security container. An FLM, one of the authorized custodians of the container, acknowledged unlocking the container on August 16, 1997, and failing to document opening or closing on standard form SF-702 "Security Container Check Sheet." The FLM also did not remember securing the container after opening.

Cause of Event

The root cause for the event was the FLM failure to follow procedure XP2-SS-SS1039 "Handling and Control of Classified Documents." The procedure adequately details the custodians responsibilities in section 6.16 "Repository Storage of Classified Documents." The procedure specifies that upon opening a classified repository, the custodian shall initial the SF-702 assigned to the repository and record the date and time of access in the "Open by" portion of the SF-702.

Event Report 97-14

The procedure further states that when securing a classified repository, close all drawers, spin the combination dial at least four times in either a clockwise or counterclockwise manner, test each drawer to assure that the locking mechanism is operable and initial and fill in the time that the repository was secured in the "closed by" portion of the SF-702. Following the securing of the repository the procedure requires the custodian to ask a fellow employee, where practical, to check the repository by spinning the combination dial at least four times in either a clockwise or counterclockwise manner and then test each drawer to assure the locking mechanism is operable. The FLM understood the opening and closing requirements contained in the procedure but became distracted, deviated from the procedural requirements and neglected to secure the container following entry.

A contributing cause of the event was an ineffective corrective action. Examples of failing to follow procedure XP2-SS-SS1039, as it applied to the opening and securing of classified containers, had been identified in the past. An assessment of 40 of 165 security containers, performed by the Security Section, April 1997, revealed deficiencies associated with 36 security containers on plantsite. One of the containers found deficient in the assessment was container 50010. The deficiencies ranged from forms SF-702 being outdated, inconsistent checks by custodians and no second party checks. All Facility Managers and container custodians affected by the assessment were issued a copy of the assessment and the responsible managers were directed to document in writing their corrective actions.

On May 12, 1997, X-344 Management responded that their corrective action was to emphasize to the container custodians the expectations of properly completing SF-702 Open/Close entries. The May 12, 1997, corrective action was ineffective because it only emphasized procedural requirements but did not ensure that the procedural requirements were being carried out. A review of security container practices following the May 12, 1997, corrective actions would have revealed that form SF-702 custodian checks and second party checks were still inconsistent and that form SF-700 "Security Container Information Form," (form containing the authorized list of container custodians) was not properly attached inside the container 50010 as required. The form SF-700 was actually located on the secretary's desk.

Corrective Actions

1. On August 18, 1997, classified material was removed from the classified container and the container was declassified.
2. On August 20, 1997, the FLM was issued a security infraction. The FLM also reviewed and signed a "Security Repositories" check sheet that details the proper securing of a security container.

Event Report 97-14

3. By October 30, 1997, Organizational Managers having jurisdiction over security containers will review this event with the container custodians within their organization.
4. By October 30, 1997, Organizational Managers having jurisdiction over security containers, will provide evidence to the Security Section that they have walked down and verified the requirements contained in procedure XP2-SS-SS1039 (section 6.16), as it applies to the opening and securing of classified containers are being met.

Extent of Exposure of Individuals to Radiation or Radioactive Materials

There were no exposures to individuals from this incident to radiation or radioactive materials.

Lessons Learned

Management's emphasis of procedural requirements did not by itself ensure that the procedure was being followed correctly. Management must verify by reviewing available evidence that personnel are meeting management's expectations for procedural adherence.

Docket No. 70-7002

Enclosure 2

Page 1 of 1

**Event Report 97-14
List of Commitments**

1. By October 30, 1997, Organizational Managers having jurisdiction over security containers will review this event with the container custodians within their organization.
2. By October 30, 1997, Organizational Managers having jurisdiction over security containers, will provide evidence to the Security Section that they have walked down and verified the requirements contained in procedure XP2-SS-SS1039 (section 6.16), as it applies to the opening and securing of classified containers are being met.