



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
National Health Physics Program
2200 Fort Roots Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72114

June 23, 2023

Bryan Parker
Division of Nuclear Material Safety
Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Region III
2443 Warrenville Road, Suite 210
Lisle, Illinois 60532-4352

Re: NRC License No. 03-23853-01VA, Report of Leaking Source

Dear Mr. Parker:

In accordance with 10 CFR 35.3067, I am forwarding the enclosed report of a leaking sealed source. The report, dated June 23, 2023, was submitted to our office by VA Western New York Healthcare System, Buffalo, New York. The facility is issued Permit Number 31-00786-02 under our NRC Master Materials License.

Please contact me, at 707-977-8052, if you have any questions about this report.

Sincerely,

EDWIN
LEIDHOLDT

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LEIDHOLDT
Date: 2023.06.23 11:18:03 -07'00'

Edwin M. Leidholdt, Jr., Ph.D., FACR
Executive Director, VHA National Health Physics Program

Enclosure

cc: Document Control Desk
Director, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: June 23, 2023

From: Executive Director, VA Western New York Healthcare System (528/00)

Subj: Leaking Cesium-137 Dose Calibrator Vial Source

To: Executive Director, VHA National Health Physics Program (11SPEC12)

1. This memorandum is being provided in fulfillment of the requirements of CFR 35.67 and 35.3067. On June 21, 2023, the facility discovered that a single sealed source of radioactive material located in the Buffalo, New York VA Medical Center nuclear medicine department contained in a vial and used for instrument calibration was damaged and leaking radioactive material.
2. Specifically, nuclear medicine staff noted a survey meter responding to potential radioactive contamination in the Buffalo VAMC PET hot lab. It was noted that the dipper, used to lower syringes of radioactive material into the dose calibrator, was contaminated. The dipper was decontaminated, and surveys and wipe tests were performed for contamination. The wipe test indicated the contamination was cesium-137 (Cs-137). Further investigation revealed a leaking Cs-137 sealed source used for quality control of the dose calibrator. The sealed source consists of a plastic vial with the Cs-137 embedded in a plastic matrix.
3. A leak test was performed on the source per 10 CFR 35.67, and it indicated greater than 0.005 microcuries of removable contamination. The leak test sample was counted on a Perkin Elmer Wizard2 gamma counter. The energy spectrum of the contamination was consistent with the 662 keV Cs-137 energy peak.
4. As required by 10 CFR 35.3067 the following information is being provided:
 - a. Sealed source model number: Eckert & Ziegler SRV-137-200U
 - b. Sealed source serial number: 1639-96-19
 - c. Radionuclide: cesium-137
 - d. Estimated activity as of June 21, 2023: 167.9 microcuries
 - e. Leak test result: 0.014 microcuries
 - f. Date of the test: June 21, 2023
5. In response to the damaged and leaking source, the following actions have been taken or are planned:
 - a. The sealed source was immediately withdrawn from use and secured within a plastic glove and both placed in a shielded container. Visual inspection of the sealed source identified two holes in the plastic vial.

Buffalo, New York VA Medical Center

- b. Contamination surveys using appropriate radiation survey instruments and wipe tests using a gamma well counter was performed of all areas and instruments which the source could have come in contact.
 - c. Samples were taken from:
 - i. The interior and exterior of the dose calibrator
 - ii. Dose calibrator dipper
 - iii. Counter on which the dose calibrator sits
 - iv. The adjacent floor
 - v. Sink
 - vi. Sink drain
 - vii. Counter surrounding the sink
 - viii. Storage area of the Cs137 sealed source vial
 - ix. Lab coats and hands of the two (2) involved technologists.
 - d. Contamination was identified on the day of testing on the dose calibrator dipper and one absorbent chux from the counter on which the dose calibrator sits.
 - e. The manufacturer will be contacted for possible failure analysis and if declined the source and other materials will be disposed by a licensed radioactive waste broker.
 - f. VAWNYHS will visually assess the facility's sealed source inventory and review certificates for Recommended Working Life (RWL). Any sources past the RWL will be preemptively withdrawn from service and replaced.
6. If additional information is required, please contact Sally Pasell, Radiation Safety Officer, at Sally.Pasell@va.gov or (206) 816-5836.

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Michael J. Swartz, FACHE
Executive Director
VA Western New York Healthcare

C: Chief of Staff (528/11)

Martha Pavon

From: Edwards, Mark W. <Mark.Edwards5@va.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 23, 2023 2:09 PM
To: Bryan Parker
Cc: Leidholdt, Ed; Boyd, Katherine R; Abell, Clinton E.; Edwards, Mark W.; Kidwell, Calvin B
Subject: [External_Sender] Buffalo NHPP Notification (Rpt of Leaking Sealed Source)
Attachments: Buffalo NHPP notification of NRC letter (2023 06 23).pdf

Mr. Parker,

In accordance with 10 CFR 35.3067. We are forwarding the enclosed report of a leaking sealed source. The incident occurred at the VA Western New York Healthcare System, Buffalo, New York; Permit No. 31-00786-02.

Would you please reply to this message to acknowledge receipt?

Please do not hesitate to call Dr. Leidholdt if you have questions.

v/r Mark

Mark W. Edwards

Mark W. Edwards
National Health Physics Program (11SPEC12)
North Little Rock, Arkansas
Office: 501-257-1515 | **lphone:** 501-257-0590
mark.edwards5@va.gov

800-815-1016 (NHPP Safety Hotline)



U.S. AIR FORCE

Martha Pavon

From: Bryan Parker
Sent: Friday, June 23, 2023 2:32 PM
To: Martha Pavon
Cc: Tammy Tomczak; Sandy Pavon
Subject: Please place in ADAMS
Attachments: [External_Sender] Buffalo NHPP Notification (Rpt of Leaking Sealed Source)

Hey Martha,

Please place the attached Report of Leaking Source from the Department of V.A. into ADAMS. A 665 is also attached.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks.

Bryan