



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY TACOM LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT COMMAND
6501 East 11 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48397-5000
August 9, 2006

TACOM Life Cycle Management Command

Regional Administrator
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Division of Nuclear Safeguards
2443 Warrenville Road Suite 210
Lisle, Illinois 60532-4352

SUBJECT: US Army 30 Day Report Pertaining to Damaged Tritium
M224 Range Indicator Ft. Bragg, NC

Dear Sir or Madam:

Reference: NRC License no. 12-00722-06
Incident Report No. 42713

This thirty-day report is in accordance with 10 CFR Part 30.50 (b). The event was reported to the licensee, TACOM-RI on 12 July 2006 by the Fort Bragg Radiation Safety Officer. On 6 July 2006 a M224 mortar range indicator containing 3.2 curies of tritium gas was broken during a maintenance operation. The M224 range indicator (NSN 1010-01-020-5626) SSDR NR-155-S-116-S is a component of the 60 mm mortar weapon. The event occurred at the 3d Special Forces Weapon Group, building E-1978, room 113. The release occurred when the M224 range indicator was being removed by two Army contractors during routine maintenance at a direct support maintenance unit. An improper method was used to remove the range indicator containing the tritium lamps from the handle assembly. Workers realized the range indicator was broken and immediately placed the device in a bag and contacted the Ft. Bragg RSO. As a result of the breakage, the small arms room where the work was being performed had to be closed for five days, surveyed and deconed by the Fort Bragg installation RSO. Initial wipe test surveys of the arms room were conducted and showed removable tritium contamination ranging from 200 to 65,000 dpms. Initial survey of areas outside the arms room

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showed contamination less than 1,000 dpm. Decontamination efforts in the arms room by the Fort. Bragg RSO brought tritium contamination levels below 1,000 dpm. Leak test of the range indicator showed maximum removable contamination of 0.95 microcuries. The M224 range indicator was double bagged and placed into low level rad waste storage for future disposal. Two maintenance personnel that were involved in the incident had a tritium bioassay taken. The two workers received a small uptake of tritium that resulted in a whole body dose of 0.6 mrem and 0.03 mrem of exposure.

The cause of this event was due maintenance workers not following current procedures in the Technical Manual for the mortar (TM 9-1010-233-23&P). Although the Army contractors were authorized to perform this maintenance, they used an inappropriate method in removing the range indicator. The Army contractors were unaware of proper maintenance procedures due to the lack of training by direct support maintenance supervision.

Corrective action:

The TACOM-RI Health Physicist/Licensee RSO directed the Fort Bragg RSO to perform training to all Army contractors who are engaged in the maintenance of weapons containing tritium devices at direct support maintenance facilities at Fort Bragg. As of 7 August 2006 all Army contractors have been trained in radiation safety and in maintenance procedures of the M224 range indicator. A new policy has been put into place that requires the removal of the M224 range indicator from the mortar handle assembly to be performed only in the designated tritium instrument repair room (TIRR) at the ITT facility, MMD. This established tritium repair facility is operated by Army contractors under the conditions of TACOM-RI license.

The Fort Bragg installation RSO or mission RSO will be made aware of maintenance contract work involving tritium radioactive commodities. The contracting officer representative (COR) at Fort Bragg will contact the Fort Bragg

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installation Safety Office RSO when contracts involving the maintenance of tritium fire control devices (TFCD's) are identified. The COR will identify the contractor, type and location of TFCD's which will assist the installation RSO in identifying who needs to be trained in radiation safety awareness and maintenance procedures.

The point of contact for this incident is Mr. Thomas G. Gizicki, Senior Health Physicist, NRC License RSO, TACOM-RI Safety Office, (309)782-2965.

Sincerely,



George G. Jarvis
TACOM LCMC Safety Director

CF:

Director of Army Safety, ATTN: Mr. Komp, 223 23d St., Suite
980 Arlington, VA 22202

HQ Army Material Command, ATTN: AMCPE-SG-R (MAJ Prins), 9301
Chapek Rd., Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-5527

Commander, US Army Special Operations Command, ATTN: Safety
Office, Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Commander, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, NC
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