

October 18, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-96-074

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 Region I staff in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

Facility

Northwest Airlines Freight Station
Jfk International Airport
New York, New York
License No: None

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
Alert
Site Area Emergency
General Emergency
X Not Applicable

Subject: PACKAGE CONTAINING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL DAMAGED BY FORKLIFT

At approximately 7:00 p.m. on October 17, 1996, Region I staff received notification from the NRC Headquarters Operations Officer (HOO) that a package containing radioactive material was damaged by a forklift at JFK International Airport, New York, NY. It was reported that the package contained 37 kBq (1 microCurie) of Am-241 and was located at the Northwest Airlines Air Freight facility, hangar #1. The package was part of a shipment from China enroute to Amersham Corp., Arlington Heights, Illinois. Northwest representatives stated that access to the hangar was restricted and the area around the package secured. Region I notifications were made to the NY State Emergency Management Office, the NY State liaison officer designee, and the NY City Poison Control Center (the NY City- designated organization for handling 24-hour emergencies involving radioactive material). A representative from the NY City Bureau of Radiological Health responded to the scene and found external damage to the package only. No damage or leakage to the package's inner contents, which contained the radioactive material, was found and radiation surveys outside the package were consistent with background levels. Northwest Airlines personnel and their health physics consultant were arranging for re-packaging of the container so that the shipment could continue. The Region I Public Affairs office is available to respond to media inquiries.

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IDR-5-1 operating experience

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