

September 23, 1996

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE** PNO-IV-96-051

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 IV staff in Arlington, Texas on this date.

**Facility**

NUCOR-YAMATO (Steel Mill)  
Blytheville, Arkansas

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

Subject: RADIOACTIVE OBJECT FOUND AT SCRAP YARD

On September 20, 1996, the Arkansas Department of Health notified the NRC Operations Center and the NRC Region IV office of the discovery of a radioactive object at the NUCOR-YAMATO Steel yard in Blytheville, Arkansas. Initially, radiation detectors at the facility detected the presence of radiation. NUCOR personnel then performed a radiation survey using a hand-held survey instrument to isolate the object. The object was described as about the size of a coffee can with foreign markings on the exterior. (NUCOR staff were unable to identify the language.) The object is estimated to weigh only a couple of pounds. Surveys performed by NUCOR staff identified a maximum radiation level of 50 milliroentgens per hour on contact. The object is expected to be a part of a scrap shipment that originated in the Netherlands some months ago. NUCOR representatives stated that the object had been secured at the facility and that no NUCOR staff had touched or come in contact with the object.

NUCOR contacted a contractor in Houston, Texas, to assist in identifying the source of radiation. Contractor representatives were expected to be on site September 21, 1996. Plans for disposal or transfer of the object are not currently known. NUCOR has notified the broker for this shipment, David J. Joseph Company, Cincinnati, Ohio.

A similar incident occurred on May 1, 1996, when NUCOR notified the state that a much larger stainless steel object in a shipment of scrap metal from the Netherlands was found to be radioactive. The container was subsequently transferred to a contractor in Tennessee for examination in a hot cell. (See PNO-IV-96-22, 22A, and 22B for further details.)

Region IV received initial notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Arkansas Department of Health at 4:15 p.m. CDT on September 20, 1996. Arkansas provided updated information at 11:40 a.m. CDT on September 23, 1996. This information is correct as of that date and time.

Region IV has informed NMSS and EPA's Region VI office in Dallas.

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