

October 22, 1996

Wheeling Hospital, Inc.  
ATTN: Gregory Merrick, M.D.  
Oncology Center  
Medical Park  
Wheeling, WV 26003

SUBJECT: LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR RESPONSE TO A LOCAL NON-EMERGENCY  
INCIDENT INVOLVING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN AND TYPE

This letter confirms our appreciation for your efforts in responding to a report of two orphan radioactive sources at Herman Strauss Industries (HSI), a scrap metal recycler, in Wheeling, WV.

HSI suspected that the sources, reportedly exhibiting  $> 2.0$  rads/hr at close range, might have come from a nearby hospital, so we called Wheeling Hospital and Ohio Valley Hospital, to ask for a check of their brachytherapy source inventory.

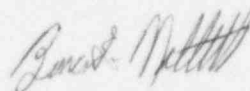
Your subsequent offer and conduct of an onsite survey was invaluable in reassuring everyone that the sources were shielded and the area free of contamination.

The original fax report from a HSI consultant indicated  $> 2.0$  rads/hr, however later measurements revealed  $> 0.2$  rads/hr. Apparently, there was an early miscommunication.

A USEPA contractor, SEG, Inc., Oak Ridge, TN subsequently identified the sources, using a container wipe sample, as exhibiting a radium/radon daughter spectrum. The sources, described as metal rods, are believed to be strip emitters taken from a gauging device in a belt weigher for coal or aggregate processing, or from an aqueous/organic phase tank height indicator. SEG, Inc., using Microshield code, estimated that the lead sheet, wrap contained about 2.0 mCi of radium, an isotope regulated not by NRC, but by West Virginia and EPA, who will obtain permission from USDOE for burial at Hanford, WA.

Again, our sincere appreciation for your timely interest and expertise in responding to a local event with significant safety questions, but fortunately a satisfactory outcome.

Sincerely,



Bruce S. Mallett, Director  
Division of Nuclear Materials Safety

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
cc: (See page 2)

Wheeling Hospital, Inc.

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cc: State of West Virginia

Wheeling Hospital, Inc.  
ATTN: Donald Hofreuter  
Hospital Administrator  
Oncology Center  
Medical Park  
Wheeling, WV 26003

OFFICE	RII.DNMS	RII.DNMS				
SIGNATURE						
NAME	B. Potter	B. Mallett				
DATE	10 / 22 / 96	10 / 23 / 96	10 / / 96	10 / / 96	10 / / 96	10 / / 96
COPY?	YES NO	(YES) NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO

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