

November 6, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-96-067

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 III staff (Lisle, Illinois) on this date.

Facility
OHMART CORP.
Ohmart Corp.
Cincinnati, Ohio
License No: 34-00639-01

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

Subject: DAMAGED CESIUM-137 SOURCE AND MINOR CONTAMINATION OF TWO WORKERS

On November 5, 1996, the licensee, a gauge manufacturer, received a source holder containing two 2-curie cesium-137 sources from Amoco Oil Co., Decatur, Alabama. The source holder was returned for service because it would not properly insert into a level gauge at the Amoco facility. Upon receipt, the source holder was placed in the source handling area of the licensee's facility. Licensee personnel performed radiation and contamination surveys of the source holder and the pallet on which it was mounted. No contamination or unusual radiation levels were detected.

When one of the cesium-137 sources was removed from the source holder, licensee personnel observed that the source capsule was damaged. They instituted emergency procedures and secured the area.

There had been seven workers in the area, and two were subsequently found to have radioactive contamination on them. The others showed no evidence of contamination. One worker had minor contamination on his hand (about 100 counts per minute). The contamination was removed by washing. The second worker had minor contamination in several spots on his hands, forearms, clothing, and shoes. A nasal smear also showed a small amount of contamination. The worker was decontaminated by showering and replacement of his clothing. The two workers will go to the University of Cincinnati for a whole body count as a precaution.

There is contamination in the work area where the source was removed. The licensee is assessing the situation and developing its decontamination plans.

The licensee notified the Amoco facility of the incident. Alabama is an Agreement State, and NRC Region II (Atlanta) has been working with the state to arrange for surveys at the Amoco facility.

Region III (Chicago) will send two radiation specialists to the Ohmart facility on November 6 to review the circumstances surrounding the incident and to monitor the licensee's activities. The State of Ohio has been notified of the incident.

The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

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The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this incident at 12:53 p.m. (EST) on November 5, 1996. This information is current as of 4 p.m. (EST) on November 5, 1996.

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