

November 18, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-96-082

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

Massachusetts General Hospital  
Fruit Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114  
Dockets: 03001867 License No: 20-03814-80

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: FIRE IN RESEARCH BUILDING AT MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

At 8:22 p.m. on November 15, 1996, a small fire that involved a potentially contaminated system was reported by the licensee to the NRC Duty Officer. The fire occurred in a laboratory vacuum system. The vacuum system pump overheated causing a small section of the system plastic piping to ignite. The pipe was downstream from the pump and away from the slightly contaminated charcoal filter. The charcoal filter was contaminated with iodine 125.

The Boston Fire Department and Hazardous Materials Team responded to the incident, as well as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the licensee's Radiation Safety Officer. The licensee stated that the fire was confined to a small section of the vacuum system piping and did not involve the slightly contaminated charcoal filter. The fire was controlled within two hours and did not result in any injury or contamination of areas or personnel.

An update of the incident was received from the licensee's Radiation Safety Officer at 9:00 a.m., November 18, 1996. Based on extensive surveys, it was determined that no radioactive material was released.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been notified.

Media interest occurred and the incident was reported by a local TV station and newspaper.

Region I Public Affairs is prepared to respond to media inquiries. This information is correct as of November 18, 1996, at 2:00 p.m.

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