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RIO ALGOM MINING CORP.

40-3453

La Sal Route

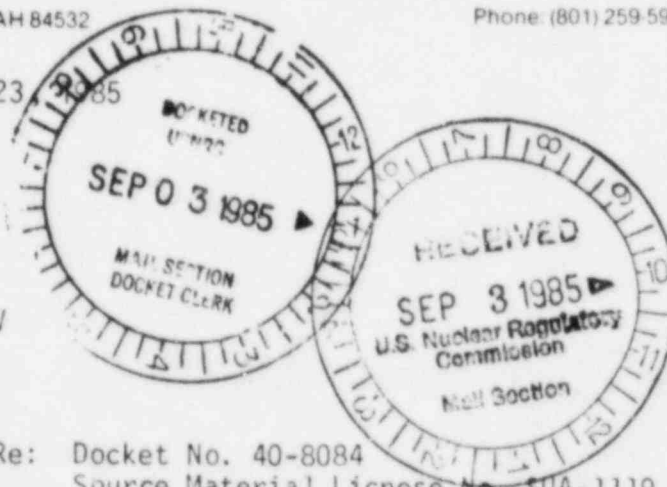
MOAB, UTAH 84532

RETURN ORIGINAL TO PDR, HQ

Phone: (801) 259-5904

August 23, 1985

Harry J. Pettengill, Chief
Licensing Branch 2
Uranium Recovery Field Office, Region IV
Box 25325
Denver, Colorado 80225



Re: Docket No. 40-8084
Source Material License No. SUA-1119

Preliminary Report of Overexposure

Dear Mr. Pettengill:

This letter is submitted in compliance with the requirements of 10CFR20.405(a)(1)(ii) and as a follow-up to our R.S.O.'s telephone conversation with yourself and Messrs. Garcia and Shopenn last Friday, August 16, 1985 in which you were informed of a possible overexposure of one of our mill maintenance workers. The individual involved was working in a restricted area and may have inhaled a quantity of air-borne uranium dust in excess of 10CFR20.103(a)(1) limits.

The incident occurred on August 8, 1985, while the individual was working on the yellowcake dryer gas cleaning system. A radiation work permit had been approved for the job and the individual was issued and fit-tested for using a half-mask respirator (Comfo II) and issued with a lapel sampler before work commenced: all standard practices at Rio Algom for the specific work assignment of cleaning the yellowcake buildup from the dryer's gas cleaning system. Normally there is no possibility of an overexposure on this job but, in this particular case, initial investigations indicate that certain factors contributed to the incident: yellowcake buildup in the system was far greater than expected because of a line-damper which had recently been re-installed to get better control of furnace draft; and, the individual unwittingly placed himself in a vulnerable position for being unnecessarily exposed to additional yellowcake dust. The incident also highlighted the need for an emergency gas venting system to be used only when the main gas scrubbing system is being worked on which, together with several design improvements, will be the subject of a license amendment application to be submitted shortly for the Commission's approval. The design improvements are expected to reduce the rate of yellowcake buildup in the gas exhaust system to a minimum, further reduce atmospheric emissions, and improve furnace draft control.

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DESIGNATED ORIGINAL

Certified By Mary C. Hood

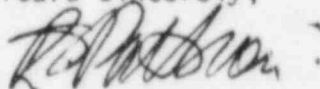
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As soon as our R.S.O., Mr. Larry Perkins, became aware of the potential overexposure he implemented all the recommendations of N.R.C.'s Regulatory Guide 8.22, sent samples off to other laboratories to confirm our own analyses, and arranged for the exposed individual to go to Salt Lake City for in vivo measurement. In addition, a meeting was held with all mill maintenance personnel on August 20, 1985 to enlighten all present of the incident and to try to find improvements in operating procedures.

A more thorough report will be forthcoming as soon as all of the data is assembled and evaluated. If you have any questions, please call or otherwise communicate.

Yours sincerely,



R. S. Pattison
Plant Superintendent

RSP:pa

Cc: M. D. Lawton
L. K. Perkins
File