

December 17, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-96-073

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
ALLIED SIGNAL, INC.
Allied Signal, Inc.
Metropolis, Illinois
License No: SUB-526

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

Subject: RELEASE OUTSIDE OF FEED MATERIALS BUILDING

At 9:21 a.m. (CST) on December 16, 1996, an Alert was declared by the licensee when a material release (hydrogen fluoride, fluorine, uranyl fluoride) was sighted coming from the Feed Materials Building. The duration of the release was approximately two minutes. The facility converts uranium ore concentrates into uranium hexafluoride for use in nuclear fuel production.

The release occurred following a breaker trip which caused a loss of power to the pumps that provide vacuum for the fluorinators. A bad pump motor connection on the scrubber system caused the electrical short that tripped the breaker. The release to the atmosphere appears to have occurred when offgases from the fluorinators were sent to the dust collector, overloading the dust collector system and releasing the excess gases to the atmosphere. The cloud of material released from the building did not appear to move offsite.

The licensee suspended operation of the fluorination units until corrective actions were implemented to address the cause of the event. During the declaration of the Alert, the licensee activated the emergency sirens and accounted for all personnel. There were no injuries to the onsite personnel. The licensee has performed and is evaluating bioassays of affected plant personnel. The licensee is also conducting analyses of environmental air samples.

NRC Region III (Chicago) has dispatched a resident inspector from the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant and an electrical inspector to conduct an onsite review of the event.

The State of Illinois and the NRC Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards have been notified. The information in the preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this event at 10:03 a.m. (CST) on December 16, 1996. The emergency declaration was terminated at 9:52 a.m. (CST) when the licensee terminated the release. The information is current as of 11:00 a.m. (CST) on December 17, 1996.

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