

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-85-61

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 the Region I staff on this date.

Facility: Institute of Scrap Iron
and Steel
(Non-Licensee)

Licensee Emergency Classification:
☐ Notification of Unusual Event
☐ Alert
☐ Site Area Emergency
☐ General Emergency
☒ Not Applicable

Subject: REPORT OF CONTAMINATED STEEL

At 5:15 p.m. on August 27, 1985, the Region I Duty Officer received a call from the Headquarters Duty Officer, reporting a call from the Institute of Scrap Iron and Steel regarding the finding of slightly contaminated steel at an unidentified facility near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Region I learned subsequently that a consultant had determined by gamma spectroscopy that the contaminant was radium-226, a naturally-occurring, non-NRC-regulated nuclide. Radiation levels from the piece of steel were measured by the consultant as 0.17 milliRoentgen per hour (mR/hr) gamma, and 3 mR/hr beta plus gamma at contact. No radiation was detectable at a distance greater than a few inches. The contaminated scrap was from well drilling equipment. The consultant expressed the opinion that the contamination was of natural origin. All other scrap at the yard was tested; no other contaminated steel was found.

All information available to Region I has been referred to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, which has jurisdiction over this material, and which has assumed responsibility. Region I plans no further action.

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