

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-85-91

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: Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut
(L/N 06-00183-03)
(DN 030-00582)

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

Subject: DISPOSAL OF PHOSPHOROUS-32 IN A LANDFILL

At 1:00 p.m. on December 3, 1985, Region I was notified by Yale University that they had inadvertently disposed of a package containing 2 millicuries of phosphorous-32 to the normal trash. Phosphorous-32 is a beta emitter with a half-life of 14 days.

The package was delivered to a University research laboratory shared by two investigators between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on December 2, 1985. There was some confusion about who was responsible for the package and it was placed with a number of empty boxes which were picked up by Yale University employees at approximately 5:00 p.m. on December 2, 1985, and taken to a trash holding area at the University. The trash in this area was subsequently transferred to a landfill and, while they were unable to recover the package, determined that it was buried under a large amount of trash. Due to the short half-life of the material, and the fact that the package was never compacted and is probably intact, the hazard to the public is small.

The cause of the unauthorized disposal will be reviewed during an inspection of Yale University prior to the end of January 1986.

The State of Connecticut has been informed.

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