

June 11, 1997

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-H-97-001

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 NMSS staff on this date.

Facility

Amersham Corporation
40 North Avenue
Burlington, Massachusetts
License No: Not Applicable

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: DEFICIENCIES IN AMERSHAM CORPORATION'S TESTING PROGRAM FOR
TRANSPORTATION PACKAGES

On June 10, 1997, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) No. 97-7-005 to Amersham Corporation, of Burlington, Massachusetts. Amersham Corporation designs and manufactures devices used for gamma radiography. These devices are certified by the NRC under the provisions of 10 CFR Part 71 as Type B packages for the transport of radiographic sources. Amersham holds 24 Certificates of Compliance for transportation package designs. The CAL was issued as a result of an NRC inspection of Amersham's transportation package testing program. The inspection identified problems regarding the testing program that called into question the adequacy of tests that Amersham performed in support of their transportation package designs. Amersham has suspended fabrication of all NRC-certified transportation packagings.

The CAL specifies that Amersham must conduct retesting of Type B transportation packages. The retesting program will be developed by an independent testing expert, and will be approved by NRC before test performance. Amersham will notify package users regarding the questions raised by NRC, the retesting that will be performed, and any administrative controls that should be taken for transporting the devices before to the retesting.

The Office of Public Affairs is preparing a press release regarding this issue. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been notified of this action by telephone and fax.

This PN is current as of 10:00 am, June 11, 1997.

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