

Date: Fri, 23 May 1997 13:55:07 -0600
From: Meredith Brown <racer@lanl.gov>
Subject: Red Alert: Shipping Container Overpressurization

The following RED/Urgent notice is NOT cleared for public release even though it is based partially on press releases surrounding the incident. Please limit distribution to DOE and contractor personnel. Mike Bishop, Fluor Daniel Fernald Lessons Learned Program Team Leader (513)648-4177, FAX:(513)648-4512, email: michael.bishop@fernald.gov

FERNALD SITEWIDE LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM

Title: **Rapid Overpressurization of a White Metal Box at Building 30**

Identifier: FN-FDF-1997-003
Date: 5/23/97

Lessons Learned: This is a preliminary event summary. Further information will be posted as it becomes available.

Discussion of Activities: Just after midnight on May 22, 1997, a waste shipping container (white metal box) experienced a rapid overpressurization. The box contained four 55-gallon drums of "129 material" (Dirty Prill, Code 5 Derbies, and Plant 1 Titan Mill Clean-out High U), one 55-gallon drum of "069 material" (Wet Sump or Filter Cake, Non-Oily and Non-Halide) and eleven drums of "069 material," 2 drums of "018 material" (Alumina Soda Lime with High Cl Content), and 1 drum of "002 material" (Sump Cake) dumped into the void space of the box.

There was no detectable spread of contamination beyond Building 30 and initial air sample results do not indicate any significant release of airborne contaminants. Airborne radioactivity data and site meteorological data indicate that a temperature inversion was in progress at the time of the event. Therefore, long-lived airborne radioactivity levels cannot be accurately determined due to radon interference. The area where the rapid overpressurization occurred was not occupied at the time of the event and there were no personnel injuries. Damage to equipment and facilities was limited to the incident container.

Immediate Actions Taken: All site operations involving packaging of potential hydrogen-generating materials were suspended. DOE-FEMP personnel notified the Nevada Test Site EOC of this event and recommended restricting operations with similar containers that have already been shipped to the test site. The cause for the rapid overpressurization is still being investigated at the time of this report. Further information will be included in subsequent reports.

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Category: Worker Safety

Priority Descriptor: Red/Urgent

References: Occurrence Report OH-FN-FDF-FEMP-1997-0034

Follow-Up Action: Information in this report is accurate to the best of our knowledge. As a means of measuring the effectiveness of this report, please notify Mike Bishop at (513) 648-4177 or by e-mail (michael.bishop@ferald.gov) of any actions taken as a result of this report or of any technical inaccuracies found