

Date sent: Thu, 30 Jul 1998 08:25:00 -0400

From: DOECAST@hq.doe.gov

Subject: **ACCIDENT AT IDAHO NATIONAL ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAB**

Dear DOE Team:

Shortly after 6:00 PM Tuesday night at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, an accident occurred in the Test Reactor Area, Building 648.

The incident occurred when fire retardant carbon dioxide was accidentally released during routine maintenance operations at the Test Reactor Area.

Sadly, Kerry K. Austin, who worked as an electrician in the Test Reactor Area, was killed as a result of the accident. Three employees injured in the accident remain in the hospital, two of whom are in serious condition and one in critical condition. As many as eleven other employees received medical attention and were released.

Our deepest sympathies are extended to the family of Kerry Austin and to the other workers injured in the accident. We are doing, and will continue to do, everything that we can to help these employees and their families.

A "Type A" Accident Investigation Board will be assembled by the end of the day, led by the DOE Headquarters Office of Environment, Safety and Health. In accordance with the Department's policy of zero tolerance for serious accidents, I will be meeting with the Idaho Operations Manager and the head of Lockheed Martin Idaho Technologies Company, which manages and operates INEEL for the Department.

We are determined not only to find the causes for this terrible accident, but also to ensure that it never happens again. The safety, health, and well-being of our workers and the public must be paramount in everything that we do.

We will continue to keep you informed of the situation.

Elizabeth A. Moler
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Energy