

Date: Fri, 13 Oct 2000 09:10:00 -0600  
From: Meredith Brown <racer@lanl.gov>  
Subject: Yellow Alert: Defective Tyvek PPE

The following Bechtel Jacobs Company, LLC Lesson Learned is distributed for utilization by other DOE sites and facilities. Please direct any questions to Joanne Schutt at schuttj@pwtor.com, or (865)483-0554, extension 133.

**TITLE: Yellow Alert- Defective Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

IDENTIFIER: Y-2000-OR-BJCETTP-0903 DATE: October 4, 2000

**LESSON LEARNED STATEMENT:** Workers need to be reminded of the need to check PPE carefully before donning to make sure the equipment is not damaged or defective. Defective PPE that is new should be reported to management so that manufacturer performance can be monitored. If PPE of low quality is being provided, the feedback on failures is needed to uncover that condition. Effective feedback is a key element of the Integrated Safety Management System. Effective feedback is also a key element of the QA Program. In the case of work in nuclear and radiological facilities, the QA requirements are PAAA regulations. Failure to follow PAAA QA regulations can subject a company or individual to fines and other penalties.

**DISCUSSION OF ACTIVITIES:** On 9/7/00 a Bechtel Jacobs Company subcontractor had issued a nonconformance report to the vendor. On 8/31/00 an employee "shook out" a Tyvek suit in order to put it on. As he did so the sleeve fell off.

**ANALYSIS:** Upon examination it appeared as if the sleeve had not been properly attached at the seam. In this particular incident the employee who observed the deficiency did not turn the suit into management for further evaluation. Further investigation revealed that other Tyvek suits in the lot of 20 cases also had defects in the seams. The cases of Tyvek suits in question were returned to vendor and have been replaced. Examination of new suits failed to identify any defects. The response to the concern from the vendor after their contact with the manufacturer is that this was an isolated incident.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:** Employees have been reminded to carefully check PPE before use and have been instructed that if problems with other garments are observed do not use them, but bring them to management for evaluation. Manufacturer performance should be monitored to ensure new PPE is of adequate quality or action is taken to improve weaknesses.

PRIORITY DESCRIPTOR: Yellow/Caution

FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY (S) (DOE): Radiological Protection; Occupational Safety and Health

BJC TREND CODE (S) (USER-DEFINED): RP - Radiological Protection; SH -Occupational Safety & Health

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KEYWORDS: Tyvek, garment, defects; PPE

REFERENCES: None

HAZARDS: Radiological; Personnel Protection

WORK ACTIVITY: Radiological

ISMS CODE: Provide Feedback & Continuous Improvement; Worker Involvement

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** Information in this report is accurate to the best of our knowledge. As means of measuring the effectiveness of this report please notify Joanne E. Schutt at (865) 483-0554, e-mail at [schuttj@pwtor.com](mailto:schuttj@pwtor.com) of any action taken as a result of this report or of any technical inaccuracies you find. Your feedback is important and appreciated.