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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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DATE MAY 13 1981

REPLY TO
ATTN OF EP-132

SUBJECT INFORMATION: Monthly Report of Significant Department of Energy Occurrences

TO Acting Under Secretary

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BACKGROUND:

This will inform the Acting Under Secretary of the significant accidents or incidents resulting in fatalities, injuries, environmental releases and/or property losses relative to Department of Energy operations reported to the Office of Environmental Protection, Safety, and Emergency Preparedness during the month of April.

DISCUSSION:

During April there were four occurrences reported: one fatality, a major property loss, an internal radiation exposure, and an oil spill.

1. Fatality at Nevada Test Site (DP/NV/REECO)

On April 4, 1981, a driller employed by Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Company, the prime support services contractor at the Nevada Test Site, was fatally injured. The driller was injured when a hose broke loose from the drill rig and fell approximately 30 feet, striking him on the right side of his face and body. A Department of Energy board is conducting an investigation.

2. Property Loss at Fast Flux Test Facility (NE/FFTFPO/HEDL)

On April 11, 1981, a temporary air-inflated storage building at the Fast Flux Test Facility was severely damaged when the building inflation power supply failed at the same time that the area was experiencing high winds. The winds tore the building fabric. The propane power supply that failed was the backup supply, which was in use at the time because of electrical maintenance being performed on the main power supply for the building. Damage is estimated to be in the \$150,000 range. A contractor board is conducting an investigation.

3. Puncture Wound Resulting in Internal Uptake of Plutonium-239 (DP/AL/LANL)

On April 17, 1981, a chemical operator at the Los Alamos National Laboratory received a puncture wound to the left hand during routine work in a glovebox. The wound resulted in an internal deposition

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COLLECTION MARKEY FILES

BOX No 5 OF 6

FOLDER 2,31 "ACCIDENTS" FILE
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of plutonium-239 that is estimated to be between two and two and a half times the maximum permissible body burden. Chelation therapy was begun after the wound was excised in an attempt to reduce the internal deposition. Contributing to the accident was a failure to follow rules for use of equipment in gloveboxes. There was no contamination outside of the glovebox. A contractor board is conducting an investigation.

4. Oil Spill at West Hackberry (EP/SPROP/DOE)

On April 25, 1981, an oil spill occurred at the West Hackberry, Louisiana, site of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Preliminary information indicates that while pressure was being bled off of one of the caverns the pressure release system suffered a failure, releasing 50 to 75 barrels of oil. The wind dissipated the oil to an area southwest of the site. Two to three barrels reached nearby Black Lake and was subsequently contained behind booms and cleaned up. Some of the remainder reached private property adjacent to the site. The loss is estimated to be in the \$50,000 range. A contractor board is conducting an investigation.

151

Barton R. House
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Environmental Protection,
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