

1956 June 25

Dr. Charles L. Dunham, Director
 Division of Biology and Medicine
 Atomic Energy Commission
 1901 Constitution Avenue
 Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Chuck:

I report here briefly on an incident in order that DBM's first information is not from the Honolulu Star-Bulletin or some other sensational journal.

On June 22, a plutonium alloy instrumentation source released some plutonium oxides in a trailer because of a loss in the integrity of its jacket. The contamination was not discovered until the evening of the following day, June 23.

Radsafe and decontamination people worked far into that night. They found the stuff in the trailer, on about 15 people, and in the clothing, bedding, and living quarters of these people. (Nothing was found in the mess halls.) Standard decontamination procedures were instituted -- showers for the men, versene and citric acid for the quarters, laundry for the lightly contaminated clothing, and the deep six for bedding, mattresses, and heavily contaminated clothing.

Three 24-hour urine specimens will be obtained ^{at weekly intervals} from the 15 contaminated individuals plus a few who were also in the area and wished it. It is the impression of the people here that of the 15, only 2 or 3 might show urinary plutonium. The specimens are being sent to IASL (Shipman) for assay, and results of the first group, which has been collected, should be known in about a week.

The industrial hygiene aspect of the incident is being headed up by one Leo Chelius of IASL, who has had considerable experience with alpha spills. He thinks that no exposures exceeding maximum permissible will be revealed.

The event is not related to the test program, and no dispatch has been sent. An incident report will probably be mailed to DMA in due time.

CONFIRMED TO BE UNCLASSIFIED
 AUTHORITY: DOE-DPC
 BY E. B. BARNES, DATE
E. Barnes 4/18/82

Sincerely yours,

Tom

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MEDICINE, HEALTH & SAFETY

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