

Date: Fri, 24 Sep 1999 10:29:28 -0600
From: Meredith Brown <racer@lanl.gov>
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Subject: Green Alert: PPE Inspection Prevents Exposure

TITLE: PPE INSPECTION WORKS

IDENTIFIER: KHLL-99-126.GP DATE: September 24, 1999

LESSONS LEARNED STATEMENT: Workers were protected from exposure to potentially significant levels of airborne contamination and potential inhalations by identifying defects in personal protective equipment prior to use. This was accomplished by utilizing techniques taught in training classes and the Material Inspection Program, following work control procedures, and paying attention to detail.

DESCRIPTION: During the time period between August 30, 1999 and September 2, 1999, defects were identified in two Rich Industry Level B Suits in Building 371 at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site. One of the defective suits was provided to Material Inspection Program personnel for further investigation. Level B suits are used primarily for radiological environments where the Derived Air Concentration for Pu exceeds 50. The defect was found at the seam between the Saranex coated Tyvek and the clear plastic visor material. Approximately twenty-five percent of the seam was not sealed. The seam is held together by a thermal bonding process. The defect was identified during the required inspection prior to work being performed. This inspection technique is taught in the Pemaire training course and an inspection checklist is used in the facilities for this personnel protective equipment and is one more step in the line of defense to protect the worker.

The first opportunity to identify a defective product is the receipt inspection process. The process for this product requires one suit of each size per order to be inspected.

After receiving the defective suit from the Industrial Hygienist, Material Inspection Program personnel proceeded to the warehouse where eighteen pallets of the suits from Lot Number 9453 were located. One suit from each pallet was inspected and six of them were identified with the same defect.

The manufacturer has been contacted regarding the initial defect and the suits in this Lot Number are being returned to the vendor.

To further ensure employee safety and the quality of the product, the inspection process for these suits has been expanded to include inspection of garments in other Lot Numbers. The broadened inspections have identified additional defects in other Lot Numbers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Facilities utilizing Level B suits should conduct inspections of the suits and determine if the seams have defects. The vendor should be contacted if defects exist.

ORIGINATOR: Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site

CONTACT: Jim McLaughlin, Kaiser-Hill Lessons Learned, 303-966-3471 or james.mclaughlin@rfets.gov

KEYWORDS: Inspection, suits, defects, seams

AUTHORIZED DERIVATIVE CLASSIFIER: Steven Cunningham

REVIEWING OFFICIAL: Steven Cunningham

DOE FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Decontamination & Decommissioning

WORK ACTIVITY: Decontamination & Decommissioning

HAZARD: Radiological

REFERENCES: Purchase Order # CSS 904488DT

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS: Information in this report is accurate to the best of our knowledge. As a means of measuring the effectiveness of this report, please notify the contact of any action taken as a result of this report or of any technical inaccuracies you find. Your feedback is appreciated.