

Date: Thu, 21 Oct 1999 08:39:29 -0600
From: Meredith Brown <racer@lanl.gov>
Subject: Red Alert: Acid Spray Burns Operator

Project Hanford Lessons Learned

Date: October 19, 1999 Identifier: 1999-RL-HNF-0038

Title: Acid Spray Burns Nuclear Chemical Operator

**** Information in this lessons learned is preliminary. Additional details will be provided in future updates as the investigation progresses. ****

Lessons Learned Statement: To be determined.

Discussion of Activities: A Nuclear Chemical Operator (NCO) at the Effluent Treatment Facility (ETF) was housekeeping, possibly sweeping and mopping, within a chemical berm inside of the ETF when she was sprayed with 92% sulfuric acid. The source of the acid spray is not known at this time. The operator immediately moved to an adjacent safety shower where she began flushing her skin and removing her contaminated clothing. She used a plant telephone located near the safety shower to summon help. She had been wearing all appropriate personal protective equipment for housekeeping activities in that area.

Emergency response personnel transported the injured employee by ambulance to a local hospital for treatment. She suffered 1st and 2nd degree burns over 24% of her body -- primarily to one arm, one leg and on one side of her face. She was transferred to Harborview Burn Center in Seattle for additional treatment because she was not experiencing the amount of pain normally associated with acid burns of this type, indicating possible nerve damage.

The spill occurred in a radiological buffer area so surveys of the operator and ambulance were performed. No radiological contamination was found. No chemicals were released from the facility

Analysis: The cause of the rupture remains under investigation.

Recommended Actions: To be determined.

Estimated Savings/Cost Avoidance: N/A

Priority Descriptor: RED/Urgent

Functional Categories (DOE): Occupational Safety & Health

Functional Categories (Hanford specific): N/A

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Keyword(s): acid spray, burns, sulfuric acid

References: Occurrence report RL--PHMC-200LWP-1999-0010