



Department of Energy
 Albuquerque Operations
 Los Alamos Area Office
 Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

AUG. 15 1990

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Bill Gallagher
 Hazardous Waste Section
 U.S. EPA, Region 6
 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
 Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Dear Mr. Gallagher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide follow-up information concerning a newly-discovered release at a Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU). Initial notification was provided to your staff, by telephone, on August 1, 1990.

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has an active Underground Storage Tank (UST) program. Part of this program requires the installation of leak detection equipment adjacent to USTS which cannot be tested using conventional methods such as hydrostatic tests (e.g., radioactive USTs that cannot be isolated and are not air tight). On July 31, 1990, such an installation was being performed near the Grit Chamber (actually used for pH adjustments) in the basement of the Technical Area (TA) 50 Industrial Wastewater Treatment Facility (SWMU Number 50-001). This installation required the drilling of six, two-inch holes adjacent to and extending below the depth of this unit. While drilling two of these holes, wet soil was brought to the surface by the auger. Samples of this soil were collected and dried for radioactive analyses. Upon completion of this analysis, we were informed that the soil contained radioisotopes which are common in the liquid waste that is treated at that facility. After this determination was made, the health physics monitors at that facility required that the holes be grouted closed to eliminate potential exposure to employees.

Flow was diverted around this unit on August 1, 1990, by using a bypass valve. This valve was originally placed in the pipeline upstream of the tank, so that routine maintenance could be performed within the system. Residue was then pumped from the tank to eliminate the possibility of further releases.

On August 1, 1990, David McInroy of LANL's Environmental Protection Group (HSE-8) and Paul Schumann of my staff notified Mr. Steve Slaten of your staff by telephone, within 24 hours of the detection of this leak as required by Module VIII, Part G, of the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) provisions of our Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit. However, a mistake was made during the telephone conversation, and the SWMU number of this unit was reported to you as 50-002. As stated above, this unit is actually SWMU Number 50-001.

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 TA-50



8670

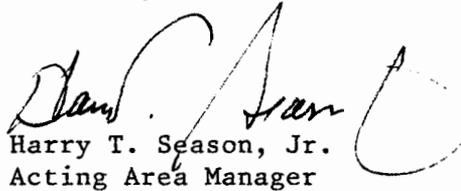
Mr. Bill Gallagher

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Since this discovery and oral notification to you, LANL has drilled around the tank and collected more samples in an attempt to characterize further what may have been released from the grit chamber. If no immediate threat to human health or the environment is determined to exist as a result of this characterization, the RCRA corrective action process will proceed as it is currently scheduled for characterization and remediation. The RFI Work Plan to conduct the characterization is currently being developed for TA-50, and is expected to be completed and approved by your office in March of 1992. However, if the current investigations being conducted indicate a potential, immediate threat to human health or the environment, we will propose for your approval an interim measure to mitigate the threat. This would be separate and distinctly different from the institutional interim actions currently being performed as a result of LANL construction requirements.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Paul Schumann of my staff. He can be reached at FTS 855-5027.

Sincerely,


Harry T. Season, Jr.
Acting Area Manager

cc:

Allen J. Tiedman, LANL, MS A120
R. Mitzelfelt, EID, Santa Fe, NM 87503
Eloy Montoya, EID, Santa Fe, NM 87503
Stuart Castle, EID, Santa FE, NM 87503

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Mr. Bill Gallagher
Hazardous Waste Section
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1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733

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