



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

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RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

NOV. 01 1990

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VIA FACSIMILE AND CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Bill Gallagher
 U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
 Region 6
 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
 Dallas, TX 75202-2733

*2355
 TA-50*

Dear Mr. Gallagher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide follow-up information concerning a newly-discovered release from a Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU). Initial notification was provided to your staff by telephone on October 17, 1990.

Members of the Health, Safety and Environment Division (HSE) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) detected trace amounts of organic vapors in soil outside of the fenced area of Material Disposal Area C (MDA-C) at Technical Area (TA) - 50. This disposal area has been designated as SWMU number 50-009. This discovery was made during a reconnaissance survey supporting a planned construction activity.

These vapors were detected in a 4" diameter hole which was drilled to a depth of 80 feet. This hole was located approximately 10 feet north of the MDA-C boundary fence. The drilling activities took place on Friday, October 12, 1990. At this time LANL's Industrial Hygiene Group (HSE-5) detected organic compounds in the drill cuttings and down-hole by using a HNU photoionizer. The drilling effort was stopped late that afternoon until a sampling strategy could be developed. The following Monday, October 15, 1990, the borehole was reopened and soil gas samples were collected using activated charcoal tubes and a pump. The samples were submitted to the Analytical Chemistry Group (HSE-9) on the same day. On October 16, 1990, at approximately 2:30 p.m., HSE-9 reported finding the following organic compounds in the samples:

<u>ANALYTE</u>	<u>CONCENTRATION</u>
Trichloroethylene	0.28 ppm
Tetrachloroethylene	0.18 ppm
1,1,1-Trichloroethane	less than 0.01 ppm

On October 17, 1990, Paul Schumann of my office and Dave McInroy of LANL verbally notified Steve Slaten, of your staff. The verbal notification was made within 24 hours of receiving the analyses, as required by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendment (HSWA) provisions of our Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit.

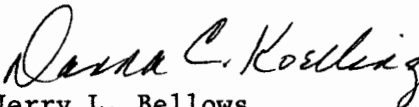


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Since this discovery and oral notification to you, LANL has been looking into sampling strategies that will further characterize what may have been released from this unit. We believe that the levels of contaminants detected outside this SWMU pose no threat to human health or the environment. Should further characterization verify that there are no immediate health or environmental risks, 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 for this SWMU, and is expected to be completed and approved by EPA by March of 1992. However, if future investigations indicate the potential for an immediate threat to human health or the environment, we will work with EPA to identify and conduct an interim action appropriate to mitigate the threat. This would be separate and distinctly different from the institutional interim actions currently being performed as a result of Laboratory construction requirements.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Paul Schumann of my staff at (505) 665-5027.

Sincerely,


for Jerry L. Bellows
Acting Area Manager

LESH:1DG-002

cc:

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EPA ID # N m 0 8 9 0 0 1 0 5 1 5

FACILITY NAME Los Alamos Scientific

MAR OTHER Risk

*(See Non-Scanned Objects for Location
and Description)*

- (1) Risk July - August Quarterly
Report LANL-ER-1990