

United States Government

Department of Energy

# memorandum

DATE: April 7, 1997  
REPLY TO  
EH-53 (R. Sastry, 301-903-4664)  
ATTN OF:  
SUBJECT: Chemical Safety Concerns / Search of Occurrence Reporting and Processing System (ORPS)  
TO: Distribution

\*\*\* LAST HARDCOPY REPORT \*\*\*

## Significant Occurrences

March, 1997

### Class 1:

None

### Class 2:

None

### Additional:

There were two concerns identified at the DWPF at Savannah River involving nitrogen purge exhaust and flow.

These occurrences are further described below with additional information, including Occurrence Report (OR) numbers, provided in the [Attachment](#).

A search of ORPS for occurrences having chemical safety relevance conducted for the month of March 1997 produced 22 reports representing potential chemical safety concerns. These occurrences are listed in the [Attachment](#). There were four occurrences categorized as "Unusual" with the remainder identified as "Off-normal". The Office of Environmental Management (EM) was Cognizant Secretarial Office (CSO) for 12 occurrences; Energy Research (ER) reported six; and Defense Programs (DP) had four. The CSO designation may change after the distribution of this monthly memorandum, and this change will be reflected in Quarterly and Annual Reviews.

In order to determine which chemical safety occurrences represent more important (significant) Levels of Concern, a classification scheme has been developed. The definitions of these Classes are as follows:

**Class 1** Occurrences characterized by an injury or exposure requiring hospital treatment, or confirmed, severe environmental effect; also occurrences that had the potential to cause these effects with

all safety barriers down, except, for example, that no one was nearby to be injured or exposed, or escaped in time, or the climatic conditions were favorable;

**Class 2** Occurrences characterized by minor injury (first aid) or exposure, or minor environmental damage; also occurrences that were near misses (where one additional safety barrier remained to prevent consequences) to those in Class 1;

**Class 3** Potential precursors to the occurrences in Class 1 or 2;

**Class 4** Minor occurrences such as leaks, spills, or releases, which may be significant in their frequency of occurrence though not in their consequences.

There were no Class 1 or Class 2 occurrences reported during March. There were six Class 3 occurrences. Among the Class 3 occurrences, in addition to those noted previously, were two at Savannah River: a propane leak and an instance of expired RCRA training qualifications. An HVAC system for fume hoods tripped at Hanford and the backup exhaust fan diesel would not start. Nitric acid and sodium hydroxide/sodium nitrite were mistakenly packed together at Hanford.

Additional information regarding these occurrences and others will be discussed in an upcoming Quarterly Review. As occurrence reports are finalized, lessons learned will be communicated.

[Signature of]

**Rama Sastry**  
**Office of Field Support**

[Attachment](#)

#### **Note to Distribution:**

This report will be the last distributed (widely) via the U.S. Mail. Please contact **John Usher** Voice: 516-344-2096, Fax: 516-344-3957, E-mail: [usher@bnl.gov](mailto:usher@bnl.gov) at Brookhaven National Laboratory to be placed on e-mail distribution, and please advise if this new policy will cause problems for you. If you want to continue to receive hardcopy, please contact John Usher who will make every effort to accommodate you.

The DOE Chemical Safety Program homepage is now available. The Internet address for this site is [http://dewey.ti.s.eh.doe.gov/web/chem\\_safety/](http://dewey.ti.s.eh.doe.gov/web/chem_safety/). This report is accessible using the **Chemical Occurrences** link via the homepage.

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