

DOWN NEWS LINE

Friday, Dec. 21, 1973

A.E.C., Dow discredit reporting of tritium study

RFAO and Dow officials jointly discredited this morning certain allegations of news media reports dealing with the AEC's official investigative report on the tritium contamination of Great Western Reservoir.

A daily newspaper report that a 1968 tritium release "apparently was never reported by Dow," was refuted by both Dow and the AEC. On the contrary, the release was detected by Dow and reported to the AEC.

In a statement released by the AEC today, Assistant Area Manager said, "As a result of releasing the Investigating Committee's report on the accidental release of tritium from the Rocky Flats plant, newspapers and news broadcasts have implied that Dow Chemical U.S.A. has not reported all incidents to the AEC. This is not correct."

continued, "An accidental release in 1968 of 600 Ci (.06 grams) of tritium from a special project was discovered by Dow using sensing devices in a glove box. No tritium was detected elsewhere on or off plant site. This incident was cited as an example of non-reporting by Dow. The release was properly reported through material accountability reports."

said the level of concentration of material in the atmosphere showed that release was well below (approximately 1/400th) the amount required for reporting. "There was no health hazard involved."

One news report stated Dow "hasn't installed alarms to detect future releases," but failed to note that ALL effluent lines at the plant are now being monitored prior to release.

As for that newspaper's statement that "Dow insisted its plant wasn't the source of any leak," (referring to the 1973 release), neither Dow nor the AEC Office at any time made such a denial. From the time the State Health Department first detected trace amounts of tritium in Great Western Reservoir, Dow officials went on record as saying that Rocky Flats was possibly the source.

HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING WHAT YOU READ THESE DAYS? You'll have the opportunity to draw your own conclusions from the AEC's investigative report. Copies of the report will be available, beginning Monday, at the plant library and at the Corral Office.