



Software Quality Assurance

MICROSOFT EXCEL SOFTWARE ISSUE

2010-03

March 2010

PURPOSE

This Safety Advisory provides information on a software quality assurance problem related to the use of Microsoft Excel.

BACKGROUND

A Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) scientist has identified a flaw in the Microsoft Excel software that can seriously affect the results of calculations that are performed using Microsoft Excel.

PNNL has reported this problem to Microsoft and it is expected that Microsoft will be issuing a “hot patch” or other fix to correct this problem. The problem has also been identified by others and affects both Microsoft Excel 2003 and 2007 versions.

PROBLEM WITH EXCEL CALCULATIONS

The error was found to occur in those cases where two or more cells are merged, and then a formula is copied and pasted into the merged cells, using the **Paste Special** formula feature. Unknown to the user, the formula actually gets entered into all of the merged cells. If a range of cells is summed which includes the merged cells, the value of the merged cells is summed multiple times.

CONCLUSIONS

- Until Microsoft issues a patch to correct the subject flaw, the users should not perform the operations of merging cells and then use the **Paste Special** formula feature to bring a formula into the merged cells.
- Determine the need to review previous calculations where this feature may have been used.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PNNL issued a Just-In-Time Report (2010-RL-HNF-0010) through the Hanford Lessons Learned/Operating Experience system. For details about the problem contact Robert Pratt at Robert.pratt@pnl.gov. Other questions should be directed to Subir Sen at subir.sen@hq.doe.gov.

Signed by

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