

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-04-016

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region IV staff on this date.

Facility

Schlumberger Technology Corporation
300 Schlumberger Drive
Sugar Land, TX
LICENSE NO.: I01833-000042
State of Texas Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL OVEREXPOSURE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

DESCRIPTION: On July 12, 2004, the Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Radiation Control (the State) notified NRC's Operations Center of a potential exposure to members of the general public from an unshielded cesium-137 (Cs-137) collimated sealed source. The Cs-137 source was used for well logging operations in Pecos County, TX, and contained 62.9 gigabecquerel (1.7 curie) of radioactivity.

The Texas licensee notified the State on July 12, 2004, of the missing sealed source from a well logging tool. The licensee reported that a well logging crew was using a rig without a floor at a well site in Pecos County, Texas. During the evening of July 9, 2004, the crew moved to a new site. While setting up for work at the new site, the crew realized that the source was missing from the well logging tool.

The crew returned to the original site and found the source in mud approximately 10-15 feet from the previous rig location. It was suspected that the source was missing for 24-36 hours. Schlumberger management was dispatched on July 13 to assess potential doses to the crew and members of the public and to investigate the event. The State also dispatched an inspector to the site.

On July 15, the State provided an update of the investigation, and reported that a person on the drilling crew (a member of the public) may have picked up the source by hand. An initial analysis resulted in a dose estimate of 0.6 gray (60 rad) to the individual's hand. Additional analyses continue in order to determine whether any other members of the public were exposed. The licensee is sending members of the well logging crew to a local hospital for blood work. The investigation has determined that no radiation surveys were performed, and procedures had not been followed by the logging crew. Several employees have been terminated. The licensee and the State are still investigating the event, and the State will keep NRC informed of its findings.

NRC Region IV has offered assistance, but the state has indicated no assistance is currently needed.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operation Center on July 12, 2004. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, STP and the Region's SLO and PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of July 16, 2004 at 11:00 a.m. (CDT)

ADAMS ACCESSION NUMBER: ML 041980398

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