

July 28, 2004

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-04-019

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

Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado
LICENSE NO.: CO # 002-27
State of Colorado Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: STUCK IRRADIATOR SOURCE

DESCRIPTION: On July 27, 2004, the Colorado Department of Health (CDH), notified NRC's Operations Center of a source stuck in the exposed position involving a J. L. Shepherd Model #354 panoramic irradiator containing 803 gigabecquerels (21.7 curies) of Cs-137. The source became stuck on June 22, 2004, when the Colorado State University's (CSU) technician was doing a monthly service check; however, the licensee did not notify the CDH until July 26, 2004.

Upon discovery of the stuck source, CSU contacted J. L. Shepherd and was told that if they obtained CDH's permission using J. L. Shepherd's procedures, they could free the stuck source themselves by pushing the source back into the shielded position. J. L. Shepherd has indicated that the likely problem is that the set screws may be loose which prevents the plunger to fully retract. In addition, CSU's radiation safety officer locked and posted the irradiator room to prevent further entry. The room was designed for irradiator use so there is no potential for exposures to staff or members of the public.

Currently, CDH is reviewing J. L. Shepherd's procedures so CSU can manually move the source back to the shielded position. CDH anticipates amending CSU's license to permit this activity, and CDH plans to be on site to observe this work.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operations Center on July 27, 2004. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, OSTP and the Region's SLO and PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of July 28, 2004 at 9:50 a.m. (CDT)

ADAMS ACCESSION NUMBER: ML042100371

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