

Turabo Testing, Inc.

April 14, 2000

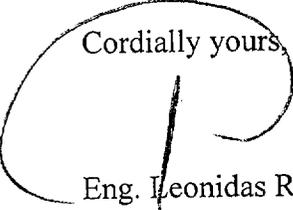
Mr. John M. Pelchat
Senior Health Physicist, Region II
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
61 Forsyth Street, SW, Suite 2385
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Sir:

Attached for your consideration is the aforementioned report. The same is the result of our investigation and summary of actions taken on those items pointed out by you or encountered during the investigation process.

Please feel free to comment on the report and/or to expand on any previous recommendation.

Cordially yours,



Eng. Leonidas R. Almonte
President

LRA:srl

Xc: Miguel A. Román - Administrator
Eng. Angel R. Salgado - Operations Manager

Enclosure

Turabo Testing, Inc.

Memorandum

To: Engr. Leonidas R. Almonte-Medina
xc: Engr. Angel R. Salgado
From: Miguel A. Román *MARomán*
Date: April 11, 2000
Subject: Los Llanos' Project – Ciales, Puerto Rico
Re: Portaprobe Nuclear Gauge Temporary Disappearance

On March 9, 2000, while performing his job at the aforementioned project, our technician Juan Pablo Reyes was unable to use his portable nuclear gauge because of weak batteries. He contacted the project foreman and given instructions to connect the gauge on an electrical outlet of a house which was supposed to be unoccupied. He left the gauge momentarily to get some elevations' information from the foreman and when he returned to where he had connected the gauge discovered that the same had disappeared. Immediately Mr. Reyes contacted the foreman and the project contractor to recover the gauge, but the same was unauthorized kept by the house owner inside the house and did not return the same until it was requested by the police and the district attorney.

After this incident on March 23, 2000 we were visited for investigation/inspection purposes by Ms. Sandra Rodríguez Roche (Departamento de la Salud de Puerto Rico) and Mr. John M. Pelchat (Nuclear Regulatory Commission). Following are highlights of their visit:

- ❖ Name and title were provided for the following personnel: Eng. Leonidas R. Almonte-President, Eng. Angel R. Salgado-Operation's Manager and Miguel A. Román-Administrator.
- ❖ Certificate of Completion to the basic training course on Radiation Safety and use of nuclear gauges was provided for all the technicians, including Mr. Juan Pablo Reyes.



- ❖ Records pertaining to leak test for our nuclear gauges including the one involved in the Ciales' incident were audited. All reviewed documents were in compliance to standards.
- ❖ Radiation dosimetry reports were provided of all our technicians, including Mr. Juan Pablo Reyes. These reports were declared as excellent by Mr. Pelchat based on the significantly low values.
- ❖ A tour of the facilities only motivated two comments or concerns by Mr. Pelchat. These were:
 - ✦ Gauges boxes labeling was not completely legible.
 - Labels were replaced and are now completely legible
 - ✦ The door to the nuclear gauges room was opened at the moment of the visit.
 - Eventhough the room and area was under constant personnel surveillance, his recommendation of always keeping the door under a padlock was well-taken and the area is now under that conditions.
- ❖ Mr. Pelchat visited the Ciales project that same day. The next day, March 24, 2000 he called the undersigned and provided a verbal summary of his visit.
 - ✦ A chronological sequence of the incident was obtained from the houseowner.
 - ✦ The inspector was very concern on how Mr. Juan Pablo Reyes handled the situation and his lack of control, specifically over the nuclear gauge during that evening hours.
- ❖ On March 24, 2000 a meeting was held with all the technicians and the Ciales incident thoroughly discussed. Engineer Salgado recalled detail information on Radiation Safety and the procedures to properly use nuclear gauges. Field concentration, responsibility and commitment was requested from all the technicians to preclude incidents/deviations of this nature.

Due to the seriousness of the incident and besides the corrective actions taken in place, following are operational and administrative steps followed to avoid recurrences of events of this nature:

- ❖ Eventhough in good conditions, other labels were replaced to ensure legibility and compliance to standards on devices, storage room and mobile units..
- ❖ Mr. Pelchat performed radiation determinations in place at the Ciales project. No adverse comments were received. However, as a follow-up on radiation exposure (if any), the house in which the nuclear gauge in question was unauthorizely kept for an extended period of time, will be monitored by Mr. José Pacheco, Physicist, on April 15, 2000 for radiation levels.
- ❖ Eventhough, the nuclear gauge in question was not due, the same was submitted to a reconfirmation leak test.

Note: Results will be furnished upon completion on the last two items.

- ❖ Since Mr. Juan Pablo Reyes lacked control on this serious incident and the fact that he should be accounted totally responsible for the same; in addition to other deviations in his personal file; it was recommended to separate him permanently from his job with Turabo Testing, Inc. effective March 30, 2000.

Please review this report and forward a copy of the same to Mr. John M. Pelchat at your earliest convenience to:

Nuclear Regulatory Commission
61 Forsyth Street
SW – Suite 23T85
Atlanta, GA 30303

MAR:srl