

May 11, 2000

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE** PNO-I-00-014

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 Region I staff in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

**Facility**

University Of Connecticut  
University Of Connecticut  
Storrs, Connecticut  
Dockets: 99990001 License No: General(31.5)

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

Subject: MISSING EXIT SIGN CONTAINING TRITIUM

On Wednesday, May 10, 2000, the University of Connecticut notified the NRC Operations Center of the possible loss of a generally licensed, self-illuminating exit sign. The exit sign, Shield Source, Inc. Model No. 101, originally contained 7 Curies of Hydrogen-3 (Tritium) as of January 1993. The activity is presently less than 5 Curies. During a walk-through for renovation of the licensee's Waring Chemistry Building, 11 exit signs were collected. According to the licensee, at one exit from the building a sign appeared to have been installed, but was now empty. The position on the wall where the sign would have been installed gave the appearance that mounting brackets had been present at one time. The licensee did not maintain an inventory of these signs so they have no positive method of determining that a sign is actually missing.

The University is continuing to investigate the matter and plans to send out a flyer to staff and students in an effort to retrieve the sign. The flyer will provide warning of the potential hazard involved should the sign be mishandled.

Tritium is a very low energy beta-emitter and when contained in a generally licensed exit sign device poses minimal risk to the general public.

This information is current as of May 11, 2000.

The State of Connecticut has been informed of the event. Region I is prepared to respond to inquires by the media.

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