

May 19, 2000

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-00-012

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 IV staff in Arlington, Texas on this date.

Facility

Oklahoma Gas & Electric
Muskogee Generating Station
P.O. Box 321
Muskogee, Oklahoma 73101

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: LOSS OF CESIUM-137 SOURCE FROM A FIXED GAUGE

On May 18, 2000, the radiation safety officer (RSO) for Oklahoma Gas & Electric (OG&E) notified the NRC Operations Center and the Region IV office of the loss of a cesium-137 source from an Ohmart Model SHDP gauge. The gauge was one of several that had been previously used at OG&E's Muskogee Generating Station. The gauge was placed in service in 1982 and contained a 7.4 gigabequerel (200 millicurie) source at that time. The gauge was removed from service in 1995 and placed in storage in a warehouse at the Muskogee Generating Station in 1997 or 1998.

This gauge was one of several that OG&E transferred to Radiation Technology, Inc., during the week of May 8, 2000. Radiation Technology, Inc., packaged the gauges for transport at the OG&E facility and transported them to Radiation Technology's facility in Odessa, Texas. At the time the gauge housing was transferred to Radiation Technology, Inc., OG&E noted that the bottom of the source housing had cables and bolts sheared off, possibly allowing the source to fall out. However, at the time the gauge housing was transferred to Radiation Technology, the staff believed the source and source holder were still within the source housing. The RSO did not notice this damage when the gauge was removed from its use location in 1997 or 1998. When Radiation Technology, Inc., staff attempted to remove the sources from the gauge source holders on May 17, the staff noted that the source was missing from one source housing and subsequently notified OG&E.

After receiving notification of the missing source, the RSO for OG&E performed surveys on May 18 in the warehouse where the gauges were previously stored and in areas of the Generating Station where the gauges were previously used. The missing source was not located at the Muskogee Generating Station. OG&E personnel are continuing their investigation of this matter, and Region IV plans to conduct a reactive inspection at OG&E's facility next week. OG&E has restricted access to the warehouse area where the gauges were previously stored until further surveys can be completed.

The States of Oklahoma and Texas have been informed. Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from OG&E representatives on May 18, 2000. Region IV has informed OEDO and NMSS.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 11:30 AM (CDT), May 19, 2000.

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