

December 5, 2000

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-00-033A

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**

Zipper Zeman Associates  
Lynnwood, Washington  
License No.: WN-1-507-1  
Washington Licensee

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON A STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

This is an update on an event that was reported by the Washington Department of Health (WDOH) on November 20, 2000, (PNO-IV-00-033) regarding a stolen Campbell Pacific Nuclear (CPN) Model MC-1 portable gauge. The WDOH was informed by Zipper Zeman Associates, that a CPN portable gauge (Serial No. MD81104670) containing a 370.0 megabecquerel (10 millicurie) source of cesium-137 and a 1850.0 megabecquerel (50 millicurie) source of americium-241/beryllium had been stolen. The licensee informed WDOH that the authorized user had been working at a temporary job site in Centralia, Washington, on Saturday, November 18, 2000, and had stayed overnight at a local motel to continue work the next day. The authorized user had secured the portable gauge in its locked case. The locked case was then chained and locked in the canopy covered bed of a 1988 Toyota four-wheel drive pickup. The pickup was last seen at 10:00 p.m. on Saturday night. At 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 19, 2000, the authorized user discovered that the pick-up had been stolen. The authorized user promptly reported the theft to the Centralia police, the licensee, and WDOH's emergency line.

On November 27, 2000, the pickup truck was found abandoned in an apartment complex in Puyallup, Washington. The canopy was gone, the rear slider window was broken and the stereo and speakers had been removed along with the portable gauge. A pipe bomb was discovered under the front seat and was destroyed by the Washington State Patrol bomb squad.

On December 3, 2000, in response to complaints from neighbors, police in Bonney Lake, Washington investigated a suspected methamphetamine lab in a trailer park. While there, officers discovered a bright orange carrying case in one of several junk piles and noted the labels indicating it contained radioactive material. The police promptly reported the discovery to the WDOH's emergency line. WDOH staff retrieved the gauge on December 4, 2000, and determined that it was intact and still in its locked case. The gauge is being held by WDOH until the licensee picks it up.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by email from WDOH at 7:40 p.m. on December 4, 2000. Region IV has informed IAT, OED0, NMSS, and OSTP.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 10:00 a.m.(CST) December 5, 2000.

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