

December 20, 2000

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-00-046

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 III staff on this date.

Facility

Ohmart Vega Corporation
Ohmart Vega Corporation
Cincinnati, Ohio
Docket:
License: Agreement State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: MISSING FIXED GAUGE SOURCES

DESCRIPTION:

On December 19, 2000, the Ohio Department of Health notified Region III (Chicago) that it had received a report from the Ohmart Vega Corporation of Cincinnati, Ohio, of three missing sealed sources. Two of the sources contain five millicuries (185 MBq) of cesium-137 and one contains 10 millicuries (370 MBq) of cesium-137. The sealed sources were used in fixed gauges that may have been sent to lead and steel recycling companies in Ohio.

The December 19, 2000, discovery of a sealed source at Marion Steel Company in Marion, Ohio, triggered the identification of the three additional missing sealed sources.

Marion Steel reported, on December 18, 2000, to the State agency that a truckload of scrap steel from Midwest Guardian in Wapakoneta, Ohio, had triggered radiation alarms at their gate. An investigation by the State resulted in the recovery of a sealed source containing approximately 10 millicuries (370 MBq) of cesium-137.

The source was traced to the Ohmart, a company which manufactures fixed gauging devices. Ohmart routinely removes radiation sources from their old gauges. The steel gauge housings contain lead shielding. After removing the radiation sources, Ohmart sends the gauges to Midwest Guardian for melting of the lead. The gauges are then forwarded to Marion Steel for steel recycling.

The source that was discovered on December 19, 2000, was not damaged, and no contamination was detected at Marion Steel. Surveys were scheduled to be conducted at the Midwest Guardian facility by State inspectors on December 20, 2000.

When it investigated the discovery of the source at Marion Steel, Ohmart discovered that three additional gauge sources were missing and may have been sent to the recycling companies.

The State of Ohio is continuing its investigation into this matter. Ohmart is searching its facilities for the missing three sources.

The NRC Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and the NRC Office of State and Tribal Programs were notified of this incident.

The information in this preliminary notification has been discussed with the State of Ohio. This information is current as of 11:30 a.m. CST on December 20, 2000.

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