

February 16, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-01-007A

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

Ricker-Atkinson-McBee & Associates
Phoenix, Arizona
License No.: 07-406
Arizona Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE- UPDATE

DESCRIPTION:

On February 15, 2001, the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (ARRA) notified the NRC Operations Center that a previously reported stolen gauge had been recovered. On February 14, 2001, the owner of a pawn shop located in Phoenix, Arizona contacted ARRA that they had the nuclear gauge and wished to release it to the proper authorities. The gauge was recovered by the licensee. The gauge and the locks were intact. The Phoenix Police Department is investigating the circumstances of the transfer of the device to the pawn shop.

Description of the Event: On February 13, 2001, the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (ARRA) notified Region IV by facsimile of a stolen portable gauge. The ARRA was informed by Ricker-Atkinson-McBee & Associates, that a Troxler Model 3440 (Serial No. 26981) portable gauge containing a 333 megabequerel (9 millicurie) cesium-137 source and a 1.63 gigabequerel (44 millicurie) americium-241/beryllium source had been stolen. The licensee informed the ARRA that the gauge had been stolen from the licensee's facility while locked and chained in the bed of a pickup truck. The lock was broken on the transport case and the gauge and scatter block was removed from the case. The licensee promptly notified the Phoenix Police Department. The ARRA also sent an inspector to the facility. The licensee is offering a \$500.00 reward for the return of the gauge. The state of Arizona informed the states of Utah, California, Colorado, New Mexico and the FBI of the theft.

NRC's Operation Center received notification of the returned gauge by facsimile from ARRA on February 15, 2001. Region IV has informed the OEDO, IAT, NMSS, OSTP and Region IV's SLO and PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 1:00 p.m. on February 16, 2001.

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