

May 15, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-01-009A

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

Drash Consulting Engineers, Inc.
Harlingen, Texas
License No.: L04724-001
Texas Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE- UPDATE

DESCRIPTION:

On May 14, 2001, the Texas Bureau of Radiation Control (TBRC) notified the NRC Operations Center that a previously reported stolen gauge had been recovered. On March 1, 2001, the TBRC notified the licensee Radiation Safety Officer by telephone that the nuclear gauge had been found. The gauge was recovered by the licensee. The gauge and the locks were intact.

Description of the Event: On February 14, 2001, the Texas Bureau of Radiation Control (TBRC) notified Region IV by facsimile of a stolen portable gauge. The TBRC was informed by Drash Consulting Engineers, Inc., that a Humboldt Model 5001-C (Serial No. 1467) portable gauge containing (10 millicuries) cesium-137 source (Serial No. 692GH) and a 1480 megabequerel (40 millicuries) americium-241/beryllium source (Serial No. NJO1429) had been stolen. The licensee informed TBRC that a gauge was stolen from the back of a pickup truck that was parked at an apartment complex in Harlingen, Texas, between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on January 1, 2001. The gauge case was locked and secured in the truck bed with chains. When the driver returned to the truck, he noted that the lid of the gauge case was cracked open and the gauge was missing. The licensee promptly notified the device manufacturer and the Harlingen Police Department. The licensee also placed an ad in the local newspaper offering a \$500.00 reward for the return of the gauge.

NRC's Operation Center received notification of the returned gauge by facsimile from TBRC on May 14, 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 May 15, 2001.

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