

June 21, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-01-023A

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

R. D. Plant Contracting
Murfreesboro, Arkansas
License No.: ARK756BP0405
Arkansas Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: UPDATE CONCERNING MISSING PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On June 14, 2001, the State of Arkansas, Department of Health (ADOH), notified Region IV that a portable gauge was reported missing from the back of an Arkansas licensee's truck. The ADOH was informed by R. D. Plant Contracting that a Troxler Electronic Laboratories Model 4640-B asphalt density gauge (Serial No. 871) containing a 296 megabequerel (8 millicurie) source of cesium-137 was believed to be chained and locked in the back of the truck around 7:00 p.m. (CDT) on June 13, 2001, at Nashville, Arkansas. The gauge was subsequently transported from an employee's home to a temporary jobsite and was discovered missing from the truck bed on arrival. Local law enforcement and the State police were promptly notified of the missing gauge. The State of Arkansas also issued a press release.

ADOH provided an update to the initial report on June 18, 2001. The gauge was found on a public roadway near Hope, Arkansas by a member of the public. The gauge was located near an intersection and was found sitting upright in its open transport container. The individual who found the gauge placed it in the transport container and transported it to his residence. Neither the gauge nor case were locked at the time the gauge was found. However, the individual who found the gauge indicated that he did not manipulate the source rod when he placed the gauge in its case, and it appears that the source remained in its shielded position. The individual kept the gauge, in his yard, over the weekend until another individual saw the gauge and recognized that it was the subject of the State's press release. The individuals contacted the Arkansas Department of Transportation which returned the gauge to the licensee. The licensee reported that the gauge was intact and not damaged. The licensee concluded that the gauge may not have been secured to the truck and fell off the back of the truck bed during transit.

Region IV confirmed this information with the State on June 20, 2001. Region IV has informed OSTP, NMSS, OEDO, and the Region's SLO and PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 11:00 a.m. on June 20.

CONTACTS: Linda Howell Linda McLean
 817-860-8213 817-860-8116