

October 10, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-01-044

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

AMEC Earth & Environment
Spokane, Washington
License No.: WN-1093-1
Washington State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE MOISTURE/DENSITY GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On October 5, 2001, the Washington Division of Radiation Protection (WDRP) notified the NRC Operations Center of a reported theft of a portable moisture/density gauge. WDRP reported that AMEC Earth & Environment reported a gauge had been stolen during the evening of October 4 while in temporary storage in a company vehicle parked at an employee's residence near Tacoma, Washington. The gauge was a Troxler Model 3440, Serial Number 31199, containing a 1.85 gigabequerel source of americium-241/beryllium and a 0.370 gigabequerel source of cesium-137.

The licensee reported that after completing work at a temporary job site on October 4, a gauge user sought and received approval from the licensee's radiation safety officer to transport the gauge to the user's home and store it there overnight. The gauge user left the gauge in its locked transport case, which was chained to the bed of a truck, and parked the truck in his driveway overnight. The truck bed was not covered. The following morning, the user discovered that the chain had been cut and the gauge stolen. The licensee has reported the theft to local police and confirmed on October 9 that a \$500 reward would be offered to anyone returning the gauge. The licensee plans to issue a press release notifying local residents of the reward.

Region IV received initial notification from the Operations Center on October 5 and updated information from WDRP on October 9.

Region IV has informed NMSS, OSTP, OEDO, IAT and the region's PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 12:00 p.m. on October 10, 2001.

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