

July 26, 2001

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE** PNO-II-01-025

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 Region II staff (Atlanta, Georgia) on this date.

**Facility**

American Ecology Recycle Center  
(An Agreement State Licensee)  
Oak Ridge, TN  
Dockets/License: R-01037

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

Subject: MISSING STRONTIUM-90 SOURCES

The Tennessee Division of Radiological Health (the Division) informed the NRC Headquarters Operations Center that the licensee had reported fourteen missing sources. The sources were identified as individual sealed strontium-90 sources having a total radioactivity of 997 millicuries (37gigabecquerels). The sources were transferred from Stan A. Huber Consultants, Inc., New Lenox, IL on June 26, 2001. The sources were believed to be in a 5 gallon plastic bucket and were transported in the licensee's vehicle. The licensee's truck driver remembers receiving the sources and delivering them to the Oak Ridge facility. The licensee has been conducting inventories and searches for the sources and related that the sources were never listed in their inventory. The licensee has reported that a 5 gallon plastic bucket of non-radioactive concrete has been located on site, and speculated that the bucket of radioactive material may have been sent to a low-level radioactive waste facility.

These sources emit high energy beta radiation which if unshielded, could present an external radiation hazard to persons near the sources. The licensee is continuing their search for the missing sources. The Division related that the licensee is experienced in handling radioactive materials and the decontamination of equipment.

Region II received initial notification of this occurrence from the Headquarters Operations Center. This information presented herein has been discussed with the State and is current as of 5:00 p.m., Thursday, July 26, 2001.

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