

November 30, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-01-053

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**

University of California at San Diego  
San Diego, California  
Docket Number: NA  
License Number: Agreement State License

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

SUBJECT: THREE IODINE-125 SEEDS REPORTED MISSING

DESCRIPTION: On November 30, 2001, the NRC Operations Center was notified by the California Radiation Control Program Office that the University of California at San Diego reported three iodine-125 seeds missing.

The licensee reported to the State that on November 28, 2001, a patient receiving palliative treatment for lung cancer had six iodine-125 seeds implanted into the lungs. Each seed contained 14.8 megabequerel (0.4 millicuries) of iodine-125. Two hours after implantation, an X-ray of the lungs was performed to verify the positioning of the seeds. It was observed that three seeds were missing. A search/survey performed by the licensee of the area did not locate the missing seeds. The licensee reported that it was possible that the seeds were coughed up by the patient and swallowed. The patient was released later that day.

The missing seeds total 44.4 megabequerel (1.2 millicuries) of activity and constitute a minimal threat to a member of the public.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by e-mail from the NRC Headquarters Duty Officer on November 30, 2001. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, OSTP, and the Region's SLO and PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 2:00 pm (CST) on November 30, 2001.

CONTACTS: Janine F. Katanic      Mark R. Shaffer  
                  817-860-8151            817-860-8287