

August 19, 2002

This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State request until 08/21/2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-041

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

Geotechnical Testing Services
Yuma, AZ
License No.: 14-30
Agreement State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On August 16, 2002, the NRC was notified by the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (ARRA) of the theft of a portable gauge. The ARRA was informed by Geotechnical Testing Services that a Humbolt moisture/density gauge, Model 5001 (Serial No. 1985) containing a 407 megabequerel (11 millicurie) cesium-137 source and a 1.6 gigabequerel (44 millicurie) americium-241/beryllium source had been stolen between 9:00 p.m (MST) on August 15 and 5:00 a.m. (MST) on August 16. The licensee informed the ARRA that the gauge was stolen from the bed of a pickup truck parked at a residence located in Yuma, Arizona. The licensee reported that the gauge was in its transport case and locked in a 16 gauge steel box in the bed of the pickup truck. The operator reported that the steel box was pried open and that the gauge and transport case were taken from the truck. The local police were promptly notified. The licensee is offering a \$500 reward for the return of the gauge and plans to issue a press release. The State is continuing to investigate this event.

The state of Arizona informed Mexico, the FBI, and the States of Utah, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by facsimile from the State at 12:36 p.m. (CDT) on August 16, 2002. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, IAT, OSTP, and the Region's SLO and PAO. The Region's SLO will notify Mexico.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 10:00 a.m. (CDT) on August 19, 2002.

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