

August 29, 2002

***This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State request until 8/30/02.***

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-046

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**

H & H container Freight Station  
Inglewood, California

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

Notification of Unusual Event

Alert

Site Area Emergency

General Emergency

Not Applicable

SUBJECT: UNCLAIMED RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL (Iridium-192, Special Form)

DESCRIPTION:

On August 22, 2002, NRC Region IV received a call from U. S. Customs Service (Customs) in Los Angeles, California, describing a package containing radioactive material which Customs discovered in a sweep of H & H's warehouse facility in Inglewood, California, on August 19. The material was described on its shipping manifest as radioactive material, special form, Iridium-192. Customs notified NRC Region IV because the material had been located in the warehouse in an in-transit status since April 5, 2002. Decay tables provided with the shipping papers indicated the activity on April 3, 2002, was approximately 3.55 Curies (0.13 GigaBecquerels). Customs agents became aware of the package when their personnel radiation monitors alarmed when near the package. No radiation surveys of the package have been performed since its discovery by Customs on August 19; however, Customs personnel radiation monitors alarmed at level 5 when placed next to the package. The Radiation Safety Officer for Customs informed NRC that a level 5 alarm corresponds to a 240 microRoentgen per hour (2.4 microGrays per hour) dose rate.

The package was shipped from Arends Inspection, of the island of Aruba, and entered the U. S. at Miami, Florida, on or about April 5, and was then shipped by air to Los Angeles and stored at the warehouse in Inglewood. The package was consigned to "I.W.C." but the address listed for the consignee was that for Industrial Nuclear Corporation (INC), a State of California licensee. When Customs contacted INC to ask why it had not filed for entry of the package, INC informed Customs that it had not been notified by the shipper that the package had been sent. INC informed the State of California that the material was most likely a returned radiographic source in its shielded transport container.

The warehouse did not transfer the package to a General Order Warehouse after being unclaimed for 15 days, as required by Customs regulations, because it understood that the General Order Warehouse would not accept hazardous goods. Customs is investigating why the warehouse did not notify them of the existence of the package after being unclaimed for 15 days. INC intended to file for entry of the package, but Customs is holding it pending any further investigation by other interested agencies. The State of California plans to investigate the event further.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from Customs on August 22, 2002. Region IV has informed NMSS, OIP, OSTP, and Region IV's PAO, SLO and OEDO.

This information has been discussed with U. S. Customs and the State of California and is current as of 3:00 P.M. (CDT) on August 28, 2002.

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