

September 20, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-02-035

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

Building and Earth Sciences
Birmingham, AL
(Agreement State Licensee)
Dockets/License:

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: ALABAMA LICENSEE'S PORTABLE GAUGE STOLEN IN TENNESSEE

The Alabama Office of Radiation Control (Radiation Control) notified the NRC Operations Center on September 19, 2002, that the licensee had reported the theft of a portable moisture/density gauge. The gauge is a Troxler Model 3430 using sealed sources containing 333 megabecquerels (9 millicuries) of cesium-137 and 1.63 gigabecquerels (44 millicuries) of americium-241:beryllium. The sources are sealed in steel capsules locked inside the casing. The sealed sources do not represent a radiological hazard unless the gauge is broken into or the capsules removed from the case.

The gauge was stolen from the Alabama licensee's truck while at an address in Memphis, Tennessee, sometime during the night of September 18, 2002. The Alabama licensee was working in Tennessee under reciprocity. The chain securing the gauge in the back of the truck had been cut and the gauge taken. The licensee has contacted the State of Tennessee and filed a report with the local police.

The licensee continues their investigation, and is considering additional methods, including offering a modest reward, to expedite recovery of the gauge. The State of Tennessee has issued a press release.

Region II received initial notification of this occurrence from the Headquarters Duty Officer. This information has been discussed with the States of Alabama and Tennessee and is current as of 9:30 a.m. September 20, 2002.

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