

***This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State Request until  
November 27, 2002***

November 22, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-069

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**

Southern California Soil and Testing, Inc.  
San Diego, California  
License No. 3329-37  
California Agreement State Licensee

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION: On November 22, 2002, the California Radiation Health Branch (the Branch) notified NRC's Operations Center to report the theft of a portable moisture/density gauge.

On November 21, 2002, the Branch received notification of the theft of a portable gauge from Southern California Soil and Testing, Inc. The licensee, Southern California Soil and Testing, Inc., reported that a Campbell Pacific Nuclear (CPN MC-3, serial # 360203032), moisture density gauge was stolen from a gauge operator's truck in San Diego County. The gauge had been secured to the bed of the truck using a cable and locks. The cable had been cut in two places and the gauge was removed. The operator was unsure of the exact location of the theft since he made two stops after picking up the gauge from the licensee's office. The first stop was at the operator's home for 25 minutes, and the next stop was at a convenience store around 6:45 a.m. The operator did not notice that the gauge was missing from the back of his truck until an hour later when he checked to see if the gauge had shifted after braking in traffic. The gauge contained 0.37 gigabequerel (10 millicuries) of Cesium-137 and 1.11 gigabequerel (50 millicuries) of americium-241 beryllium. The licensee has offered a monetary reward for return of the gauge. Local law enforcement was notified, and the event had news coverage by a local television station.

Region IV received initial notification of this occurrence electronically from NRC's Operations Center at 1:00 p.m. (CST) on November 22, 2002. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, STP, IAT and the Region's PAO and SLO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 2:00 p.m. (CST) on November 22, 2002.

CONTACTS: Linda McLean  
817-860-8116

Vivian Campbell  
817-860-8143