

This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State Request until December 4, 2002

December 2, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-073

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

Earth Consultants, Inc.
Bellevue, WA
License No. WN-LO61-1
Washington 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 29, 2002, the NRC was notified by the Washington Department of Health (WDOH), Division of Radiation Protection, of the theft of a Troxler moisture/density gauge, Model 3411B (Serial No. 15525). The gauge contained a 0.37 gigabequerel (10 millicurie) cesium-137 source and a 1.85 gigabequerel (50 millicurie) americium-241/beryllium source. Earth Consultants, Inc., informed the WDOH that the authorized user had been working at a temporary job site, and had returned to his residence in Seattle, Washington, where he parked his pickup truck at 7:30 p.m. (PDT) on November 27, 2002. The Troxler gauge was locked in its transportation case and chained to the open bed of his pickup truck. The transportation case was visible, but was secured to the bed of the truck. When the authorized user returned to the truck at 4:00 a.m. (PDT) the next morning, he noticed that the gauge was missing. The licensee in examining the truck determined that during the night an attempt was made to cut the chain. The attempt to cut the chain failed and the case was then broken off the case handle through which the chain had secured the case and portable gauge to the vehicle. The damaged case, presumably still locked, and the locked portable gauge were then removed from the bed of the pickup truck. The local police and the WDOH were promptly notified.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by email from the State at 12:49 p.m. (CDT) on November 29, 2002. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, IAT, OSTP, and the Region's SLO and PAO. The Region's SLO will notify Canada.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 11:00 a.m. (CDT), December 2, 2002.

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