THIS EVENT IS NOT FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE PER AGREEMENT STATE REQUEST UNTIL 12/5/02.
December 3, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-074

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
Geosoils
Van Nuys, California
License No.: CA 4741-19
California Agreement State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification
___ Notification of Unusual Event
___ Alert
___ Site Area Emergency
___ General Emergency
_X_ Not Applicable

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On December 2, 2002, the California Radiation Health Branch (the Branch) notified NRC's Operations Center of the reported theft of a portable gauge.

Geosoils, a California licensee, left a voice mail message on November 29, 2002, reporting the theft of a portable gauge. The Branch did not receive the message until December 2, 2002, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The licensee reported that a CPN International, Inc. Model MC-3 (Serial No. M370903921), moisture/density gauge was stolen from a gauge operator's truck while parked at his residence in the city of Gardena. The gauge operator reported that he had stored the gauge in his garage during the night of November 28, 2002; at 8:00 a.m. (PST) on November 29, the operator secured the gauge in its transportation case to the bed of the truck with a chain. After securing the gauge, the operator went back into his residence, returning to his truck at 9:00 a.m. (PST) to discover that the chain had been cut. The transportation case and gauge were missing. The gauge contained a nominal 0.37 gigabequerel (10 millicurie) of Cesium-137 and 1.85 gigabequerel (50 millicurie) of americium-241 beryllium. The licensee promptly notified the local police and plans to issue a press release offering a reward for the return of the gauge. The Branch is continuing to investigate this event.

Region IV received initial notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operations Center on December 2, 2002. Region IV has informed the OEDO, NMSS, OSTP, IAT and the Region's PAO and SLO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 11:00 a.m. on December 3, 2002.

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