December 3, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-071A

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
Soils and Material Consultants, Inc.
Arvada, Colorado
License No.: 595-01
Colorado Agreement State Licensee

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

SUBJECT: UPDATE - STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE FOUND

DESCRIPTION:

On December 3, 2002, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (the Department) notified Region IV that a portable moisture/density gauge previously reported as stolen has been found.

On November 27, 2002, the Department notified NRC's Operations Center of the theft of a CPN International Inc. Model MC1-DR (Serial No. MD 80804445), containing a 0.37 gigabequerel (10 millicurie) source of cesium-137 and a 1.85 gigabequerel (50 millicurie) source of americium-241 beryllium. The licensee reported that the gauge had been stolen from the back of a camper truck on November 20, 2002, while parked at a Walmart located in Brighton, Colorado.

Soils and Material Consultants, Inc., a Colorado licensee, informed the Department on December 3, 2002, that the gauge was found in good condition at the intersection of State Highway 470 and I-70 (metro Denver) by a member of the public. The member of the public had telephoned the contact number on the gauge's transportation case. The licensee recovered the gauge from the site and is performing a leak test on the gauge to determine if there is removable contamination. The Department is continuing to follow up on this event.

Region IV received initial notification of this occurrence by telephone from the State at 2:00 p.m. (CST) on December 3, 2002. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, OSTP, and the Region's PAO and SLO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 2:30 p.m. (CST) on December 3, 2002.

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