THIS EVENT IS NOT FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE PER AGREEMENT STATE REQUEST UNTIL 12/26/02.

December 24, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-079

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
P & M Construction, Inc.
Ponderosa, New Mexico
License No.: DM159-03
New Mexico Agreement State License

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On December 23, 2002, the NRC Operations Center received notification from the New Mexico Radiation Licensing and Registration Program (the Program) that a portable gauge was reported stolen.

On December 12, 2002, the Program received notification from P & M Construction, Inc., that a Troxler Model 3411B (serial #12703) moisture density gauge was stolen from a gauge operator's shop in Ponderosa, New Mexico. The portable gauge was locked in its transport container with a locked chain securing the container. The chain was cut and the locked container removed from the shop. The gauge contained 0.37 gigabequerel (10 millicuries) of cesium-137 (sealed source serial #409584) and 1.11 gigabequerel (50 millicuries) of americium-241 beryllium (sealed source serial # 477368) . Local law enforcement was notified.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operations Center on December 24, 2002. Region IV has informed IAT, NMSS, OEDO, STP, and Region IV's PAO and SLO. This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 10:00 a.m. (CST) on December 24, 2002.

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