

This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State Request until February 24, 2003

February 20, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-03-010

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

Engineering Consulting Services, LTD
Houston, Texas
License No.: L05451-000
Texas Agreement State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: STOLEN PORTABLE GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On February 19, 2003, the Texas Department of Health (the Department) notified NRC's Operations Center of the reported theft of a portable moisture/density gauge.

On February 19, 2003, the Department received notification of the theft of the gauge from Engineering Consulting Services, LTD, a Texas licensee. The licensee reported that the gauge had been used on February 18, 2003. At close of business, the gauge operator locked the gauge handle, placed the gauge in its transportation case, and the locked the case with a chain and lock inside a storage (Conex) container. When the gauge operator returned to the construction site the following day, he discovered all of the contractor's Conex containers had been broken into and "cleaned out," including the one that had contained the gauge. The gauge is a Troxler Electronic Laboratories Model 3430 (Serial No. 20385), containing a 0.30 gigabequerel (8 millicurie) source of cesium-137 (Serial No. 75-1733) and a 1.48 gigabequerel (40 millicurie) source of americium-241:beryllium (Serial No. 47-15863). The Houston Police Department was notified and are investigating the theft. The Department is continuing to investigate this event.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operations Center on February 19, 2003. Region IV has informed NMSS, OEDO, STP, Mexico, 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 February 20, 2003.

CONTACTS: Linda McLean
817-860-8116

Elmo Collins
817-860-8108