

March 28, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-03-004

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 Region II staff (Atlanta, Georgia) on this date.

Facility

Thompson Engineering & Testing, Inc.
(An Agreement State Licensee)
Montgomery, AL
Alabama License: 694

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: MISSING PORTABLE GAUGE

The Alabama Bureau of Radiation Control (the Bureau) notified the NRC Operations Center that the licensee reported a portable gauge containing radioactive material missing from their inventory. The gauge is a Troxler, Model 3440, serial number 32128, containing 9 millicuries (333 megabecquerels) of cesium-137 and 44 millicuries (1.63 gigabecquerels) of americium-241:beryllium. The radioactive sources are encapsulated, sealed and locked inside the gauge, and do not present a hazard as long as they remain inside the gauge.

The licensee reported to the Bureau that the gauge was used at a Montgomery, AL construction site in August of 2002. The last time the gauge was confirmed to be in the possession of the licensee was when it was tested for leakage in September of 2002. The gauge was determined to be missing during a routine inventory and leak test procedure in March of 2003. The licensee has several offices located in the States of Alabama and Tennessee. The licensee is checking all other locations where the gauges are stored, and with other contractors that were working at the same construction sites.

The Bureau has the event under investigation.

Region II received initial notification of this occurrence by electronic mail from the Bureau. This information has been discussed with the Bureau and is current as of 9:00 a.m., Friday, March 28, 2003.

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