

January 8, 2004

***THIS EVENT IS NOT FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE PER AGREEMENT STATE REQUEST UNTIL 1/9/04.***

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-04-001

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**

Vulcan Chemicals  
Geismar, Louisiana  
License No.: LA-2848-L01  
Louisiana Agreement State Licensee

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

SUBJECT: LOST FIXED GAUGE

DESCRIPTION:

On January 6, 2004, the State of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (the State) notified NRC's Operations Center about a missing fixed gauge.

On November 21, 2003, the State received notification from Vulcan Chemicals, a State of Louisiana licensee, that a fixed gauge was discovered missing on October 30, 2003. Vulcan Chemicals, located in Geismar, Louisiana, indicated that a Kay-Ray Model 7063P (Serial No. 12349) fixed gauge was missing from its storage location. The gauge had been placed in permanent storage since 1984 and was last accounted for on September 4, 2003. During the period from September 4, 2003 to October 30, 2003, the warehouse was renovated to prepare the space for other uses. The licensee has notified all of its scrap metal contractors to be on alert for the device. The fixed gauge originally contained a 18.5 gigabequerel (500 millicurie) cesium-137 source. The source has decayed to approximately 11.7 gigabequerel (316 millicurie). The State and the licensee are continuing to investigate this event.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from NRC's Operations Center on January 6, 2004. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, OSTP, and the Region's SLO and PAO.

This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of 4:00 p.m on January 8, 2004.

ADAMS ACCESSION NUMBER: ML040081144

CONTACTS: Vivian Campbell      Elmo Collins  
              817-860-8143            817-860-8106