February 27, 2007
THIS EVENT IS NOT FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE PER AGREEMENT STATE REQUEST UNTIL 03/01/07

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-07-002

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	**Licensee Emergency Classification**
Southwest Research Institute	__ Notification of Unusual Event
San Antonio, Texas	___ Alert
	___ Site Area Emergency
Texas Agreement State Licensee	___ General Emergency
	X Not Applicable

SUBJECT: REPORT OF LEAKING SOURCE

DESCRIPTION: On February 26, 2007, the state of Texas Department of State Health Services (the state) notified the NRC Operations Center of an apparently leaking source (EN 43188). The state was notified by Southwest Research Institute (SRI) that they had received eight cobalt-60 sources from White Sands Missile Range. SRI stated that the eight sources were in separate "containers." The contamination levels on the outside of each "container" were acceptable. SRI reported that when they opened one of the "containers" (inside a hot cell), high contamination levels were found. The "container" was sealed and no other "containers" were opened.

On February 27, 2007, Region IV staff contacted the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) for White Sands Missile Range. The sources shipped to SRI had been in storage for about 7 years prior to transfer. The RSO stated that the sources had been leak tested prior to shipment with acceptable results. The sources were inside two shipping containers which had been verified to have acceptable contamination limits before shipping.

With information provided by the RSO, Region IV determined that the eight "containers" reported by SRI were actually eight source "carriers." Each "carrier" is a part of a source assembly and encloses the source material. It was not until SRI disassembled a "carrier" (inside a hot cell) that the high levels of contamination were found. This information indicates that there was not a problem with a leaking source or external contamination during shipment.

Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, FSME, and the Region's SLO and PAO. Region IV has been monitoring the state's activities related to the event and offered assistance, if needed.

This information is current as of 4:00 p.m. (CST) on February 27, 2007.

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