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PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

January 27, 1981

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-81-04A

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IE staff on this date.

FACILITY: General Public

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SERIOUS RADIATION EXPOSURE UPDATE

Contacts with the individual's attending physician at Okmulgee have verified that one individual has received a highly significant external dose from radiation to the upper torso and left forearm. The attending physician was reluctant to release information concerning the individual without his consent but did state that his bone marrow had been destroyed and that he was transferred on January 25, 1981 to St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It is the medical opinion that the individual has received a lethal dose. Dr. Maxfield, Jr., NRC Medical Consultant, is contacting the physician at St. Francis Hospital to obtain medical data and be available for consultation. A medical ethics problem prevented the transfer of the patient to the care of Dr. Carl Bogardus as previously reported; therefore, the Oklahoma State Health Department Commission halted any State involvement.

The individual was admitted to the Okmulgee hospital on January 19, 1981 after relatives noticed the bleeding and burns on his left arm and upper torso. There have been no known reports of radiation incidents recently in Oklahoma.

A radiographic device containing a 33-curie Iridium-192 source was discovered missing from an NRC licensed radiography in Henryetta, Oklahoma on January 2, 1981. A search was made on January 3 and 4, 1981. The source was found intact and locked on the porch of the licensee's operations manager on January 5, 1981. The exposed individual lives one block from where the source was found to be missing.

A Region IV investigator and radiation specialist are currently in Oklahoma to investigate the circumstances surrounding the exposure.

There has been no media involvement to date. The NRC plans to issue a press release on January 27, 1981.

The state of Oklahoma and Texas have been notified. The Office of State Programs has been notified.

The above information was obtained in telephone conversations on January 26, 1981 with the attending physician at the Okmulgee, Oklahoma Hospital, Dr. Carl Bogardus, Oklahoma Medical Center, Oklahoma State Health Department personnel and Dr. Maxfield, NRC Medical Consultant.

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