

Date: February 17, 1981

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-81-22

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: Boise Cascade (LN-18-01926-02)
Rumford, Maine
DN 30-04485

Subject: LOSS OF A CESIUM-137 THICKNESS GAUGE

On February 16, 1981 the licensee informed the Headquarters Duty Officer by telephone that a thickness gauge containing about 17 millicuries of Cesium-137 was missing. The Radiation Safety Officer identified the gauge as missing during a routine walk-through of the mill on February 13, 1981. The Radiation Safety Officer reported that the gauge had been taken off line during January 1981 by the foreman of that area and placed in the licensee's salvage department. The gauge was mistakenly shipped to Prolerized, a scrap metal company, in Everett, Massachusetts on February 10, 1981.

The licensee has notified Prolerized and the state of Maine. Region I has informed the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A joint survey to recover the source is planned by a representative of Massachusetts and the licensee within the next two days. Prolerized will isolate the area at their scrap yard where the gauge would have been placed until the survey is complete.

A press release is not planned by Region I at this time. A press release will be reconsidered if the source is not recovered during the joint survey. Region I will respond to media inquiries.

NRC Region I received notification of the occurrence by telephone from the Headquarters Duty Officer at 11:50 a.m. on February 16, 1981.

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