

*J. Smith*

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-94-15

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 III staff on this date.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Cleveland Fire Department	General Emergency
Cleveland, Ohio	Site Area Emergency
	Alert
Non-licensee	Unusual Event
	X Not Applicable

Subject: POSSIBLE MISSING RADIOACTIVE SOURCE

At 1:00 p.m. (CST) on March 17, 1994, Ohio Emergency Management Agency contacted Region III (Chicago) regarding an abandoned shielded lead container ("pig") used to store and transport radioactive materials. The container was unlocked and empty, but had internal contamination.

At approximately 11:00 a.m. (EST) on March 16, 1994, a resident of Cleveland saw three children playing with a lead container at 6610 Morgan Avenue in a light industrial and residential neighborhood. The children ran away as he approached the site. A partially obliterated label was on the container with the words "Gamma Industries" from Louisiana. (The company is out of business.)

The resident took the container to the Cleveland Fire Department. The Cleveland Fire Department monitored the container with radiological equipment and found no evidence of a radioactive source contained inside. Radiological equipment was used to survey the area where the container was found and no radiological source or contamination was found.

The Cleveland Fire Department contacted the Ohio Emergency Management Agency which conducted further radiological inspections. No contamination was found on the exterior of the container. However, low level removable contamination was detected inside the container. Case Western University in Cleveland analyzed the contamination and identified it as cesium-137.

The container is currently secured at the Cleveland Fire Training Academy. The Cleveland Fire Department is currently searching for the children who were playing with the container.

The Cleveland Fire Department is planning a news conference later today (March 18) to provide information on the container and precautions to be used if a radioactive source had been inside. (The container would be used to store up to a curie level radioactive source -- such a source if held close to the body for more than a few minutes could cause a radiation burn.)

There have been no reports of a missing radioactive source in the Cleveland area. Region III (Chicago) is attempting to determine the use of the storage container and to identify its owner.

Region III has two inspectors in the Cleveland area on other matters who have been dispatched to assist the Fire Department. A third inspector and the Chief, State and Government Affairs, are being dispatched to Cleveland

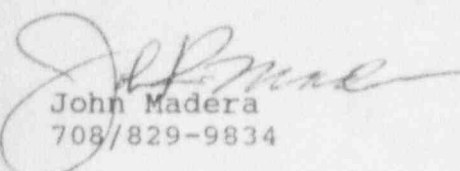
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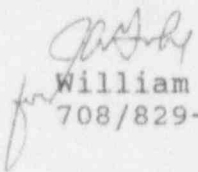
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to assist state and local personnel in coordinating the response to this potential hazard. Public Affairs is also coordinating with Cleveland personnel.

The State of Ohio has been notified. The information is current as of 9:30 a.m. (CST) on March 18, 1994.

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