

April 12, 1994

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-94-015

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

Blazer Inspection
Tx Agreement State Licensee
Texas City, Texas

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: RADIOGRAPHER OVEREXPOSURE

The Texas Bureau of Radiation Control (BRC) received notification on April 11, 1994, from a Texas radiography licensee, Blazer Inspection, concerning an overexposure incident that resulted in physical damage to a radiographer's left forefinger and thumb. The Texas BRC is performing an immediate reenactment to determine estimated radiation exposures to the radiographer.

The incident occurred on February 23, 1994, during a source disconnect, when a radiographer attempted to retrieve the source from muddy ground with a pair of pliers. The source was slipping loose from the pliers and the radiographer instinctively caught the source with the forefinger and thumb of his left hand, for a brief instant. The licensee did not immediately report this mishap to the Texas BRC. The licensee did obtain a film badge reading for the radiographer (1.05 Rem whole body dose), and did seek medical assistance when blisters appeared on the radiographer's fingers, about 10 days later. Dr. Vinc Collins, Houston, Texas, is providing medical followup of the radiographer and has said the radiographer can return to work activities.

At least two violations appear to have occurred: (1) The licensee did not immediately report the source disconnect to the Bureau, and (2) the licensee did not immediately report the physical damage, i.e., blistering to the radiographer's fingers. The Texas BRC is considering escalated enforcement action. Region IV received notification of this incident on April 11, 1994, and has notified NMSS and SP. There is no known media interest in this incident at this time.

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