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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.

Facility: University of Minnesota Licensee Emergency Classification  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota General Emergency Site Area Emergency  
 Alert Unusual Event N/A X  
 License No. 22-00187-46

Subject: INADVERTENT LOSS AND INCINERATION OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL *WDA*

On February 11, 1991, the licensee discovered the inadvertent loss and subsequent incineration of two vials of licensed materials. One vial contained approximately 500 microcuries of phosphorus-32 and the other vial contained approximately 250 microcuries of sulfur-35. Both vials were labeled to a phosphate compound for non-human research purposes.

The licensed materials were received by the licensee on Friday, February 8, 1991, and were transferred on the day to an authorized university researcher. Upon receipt, the researcher removed the outer packing slip and placed the container on the laboratory floor directly adjacent to a trash can with intentions of adding the materials to his inventory later in the day. The actual container was not opened by the researcher.

Subsequent to placing the container on the floor, a custodian cleaning the laboratory saw the package and removed it as trash assuming that it was meant for disposal since it was located adjacent to the trash can. The package itself was not labeled as radioactive because the materials are considered a "limited quantity" and are exempt from external package labeling requirements.

Upon investigating this matter the licensee has determined that the package, along with other university trash, was transferred to the Hennepin County incinerator and incinerated on Saturday, February 9, 1991.

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\*Denotes a Displaywriter/PC not an IBM 5520 Terminal.

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Although this quantity of materials does not pose any significant health hazard, the licensee is issuing a news release regarding the incident.

The State of Minnesota has been notified. Region III will review the circumstances surrounding the event during a future inspection. The information in this Preliminary Notification has been reviewed with license management.

Region III was notified of the loss at approximately 12:30 p.m. (CST) on February 11, 1991. This information is current as of 3:00 p.m. on February 11, 1991.

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