

March 10, 1994

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-94-007

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

Southwestern Laboratories, Inc.
Southwestern Laboratories, Inc.
P.O. Box 8768
Houston, Texas 77249
Dockets: 03029136 License No: 42-26828-01

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: STOLEN TROXLER GAUGE RECOVERED

On February 19, 1994, at 2:30 p.m. EST, Mr. Stowe, of Southwestern Laboratories, Inc., (State of Texas licensee), telephoned HOO to report the theft of a Troxler moisture density gauge. A licensee employee was responsible for transporting the gauge to a temporary work site the following day. Therefore, the gauge, which contained 40 millicuries of Am-241 and 8 millicuries of Cs-137, was locked inside a Troxler transportation case and chained to the bed of a pickup truck parked at the employee's home in De Soto, Texas. At approximately 12:30 a.m. CST on February 19, 1994, the employee found the chains securing the gauge cut and the gauge missing. The employee notified Mr. Stowe, who then notified the local Police Department, the State of Texas and DOT.

The licensee initiated a search for the stolen gauge, contacted major gauge manufacturers to inform them of the theft, and placed an advertisement in the local newspapers.

On February 24, 1994, the gauge was located by the Hutchins Fire Department, in an alley at the corner of South Lemon and Breneman Street in Hutchins, Texas. The Fire Chief attempted to contact the State radiation control program that day, but was unable to make contact until February 25, 1994. The State of Texas, Bureau of Radiation Control took possession of the gauge on February 25, 1994. Both the gauge and the shipping container appeared to be in good condition. A survey indicated no abnormal radiation levels. The licensee transported the gauge to its facility at approximately 4:30 p.m. CST, on February 25, 1994.

Region IV RDO received notification of this occurrence by telephone from HOO at 7:45 a.m. CST, on February 19, 1994.

This information has been confirmed with a State of Texas, Bureau of Radiation Control representative.

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