

Date: August 10, 1994

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PN19446

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 I staff on this date.

Facility:

Alteon, Inc.
170 Williams Drive
Ramsey, New Jersey 07446

Licensee Emergency Classification:

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

Docket No.: 030-31362

License No.: 29-28447-01

Event No.: NONE

Event Location Code: MAT

Subject: LOSS OF 1.7 MILLICURIES OF IODINE-125

At 1:00 p.m., August 10, 1994, Region I received notification from the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) of Alteon, Inc. that a package containing two vials of radioactive iodine-125 were missing from their facility located in Ramsey, New Jersey. Alteon, Inc. is a development stage pharmaceutical company focused on the treatment of complications of diabetes and aging. The NRC Operations Center received similar notification at 1:30 p.m., August 10, 1994.

On August 4, 1994 the licensee received three vials of iodine-125. During the receipt survey, the RSO was distracted and left the box with two of the three vials on the floor near the laboratory bench. The box did not require a White I label but was marked as containing radioactive material.

On August 10, 1994 the RSO discovered two vials missing. The vials contain 1.7 millicuries total (0.5 millicuries in one vial and 1.2 millicuries in the other). Each vial was received in its lead pig in a screw top container inside a styrofoam container. The lead pigs and screw top containers were sealed with "Caution Radioactive Material" tape. The RSO conducted a search of the facility and did not find the material. The RSO believes that housekeeping must have picked up the box, even though the housekeeping supervisor said that the housekeepers only pick up trash cans and not boxes on the floor near laboratory benches. The RSO and other laboratory personnel confirmed that the housekeepers have taken empty boxes when left at the end of the laboratory bench in the past.

Housekeeping discards material into dumpsters at the licensee's facility. The dumpster was emptied twice between August 4 and August 10, 1994. The dumpster contents went to the local trash collection agency, Bergen Utilities, where the material was placed into different dump trucks and sent to various landfills. Bergen Utilities told the RSO that there is no way to track the location of their waste.

A representative of the State of New Jersey Bureau of Radiological Health was notified by Region I on August 10, 1994. NRC Region I is prepared to respond to media inquiries. Region I will follow the licensee's actions.

160036

The PN is current as of 2:00 p.m., August 10, 1994.

CONTACT: K. Dolce
(610) 337-5251

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