

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-83-92

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: Woodward Clyde Consultants  
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462  
License No. 37-19654-01  
Docket No. 030-10948

Licensee Emergency Classification:  
 Notification of Unusual Event  
 Alert  
 Site Area Emergency  
 General Emergency  
 Not Applicable

Subject: MOISTURE-DENSITY GAUGE CONTAINING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL RUN OVER BY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

A licensee representative notified Region I by telephone at 2:20 p.m., on August 29, 1983, that a moisture-density gauge containing 2.3 millicuries of radium-226 had been run over at a paving site approximately 15 minutes earlier. The area around the gauge had been secured. The licensee did not know if the source had been released from its shielding but was proceeding on this assumption. The paving site is on Philmont Ave. near Willow Grove, Pennsylvania and is a major traffic artery.

Although this particular gauge is not licensed by the NRC, Region I sent two inspectors to the site at 3:00 p.m., to assist the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The inspectors arrived at the site about 4:10 p.m., and verified that the source was partially unshielded. Radiation level surveys and wipe tests indicated the source was intact. The gauge was removed from the roadway and the source manually returned to the shield. The gauge housing was damaged, but the shield was complete. The shielding shutter was closed and the source totally shielded by 4:35 p.m. The licensee will return the source to the manufacturer for disposal.

Region I has notified the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. There was considerable media interest. Region I does not plan to issue a press release but is responding to inquiries.

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