

November 20, 1997

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-97-070

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 Region IV staff in Arlington, Texas on this date.

Facility**Licensee Emergency Classification**

U.S. Air Force

Notification of Unusual Event

Dover Air Force Base

Alert

Dover AFB

Site Area Emergency

Dover, Delaware

General Emergency

Dockets: 03028641 License No: 42-23539-01AF X Not Applicable

Subject: LOSS OF GENERALLY LICENSED EXIT SIGNS

On November 20, 1997, a representative of the U.S. Air Force Radioisotope Committee (RIC) provided telephone notification to the Region IV office of two missing exit signs that contained tritium. Information known for one of the signs indicated that, allowing for decay, the sign would currently contain approximately 12 curies of tritium. No information was currently available for the activity of the other sign.

In late July 1997, the Dover Air Force Base Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) discovered that the first exit sign, slated for disposal through Wright-Patterson AFB, never arrived at that base. Inquiries to Federal Express showed that the package was delivered to the Dover AFB Supply Squadron instead of Wright-Patterson. An airman from the Dover AFB Supply Squadron signed for the exit sign but could not remember what he did with the sign. A thorough search of the supply warehouse, medical supply, and the Aerial Port was made, and the search did not locate the exit sign. The licensee stated that further actions were pending.

During the RSO's inventory of exit signs on October 20, 1997, he noted that a second sign was missing from Building 501. Civil Engineering Squadron personnel, the building manager, and the RSO searched building 501 without locating the sign. The RSO contacted contractors who worked in building 501 who verified that they had not removed the sign. The licensee stated that further actions were pending.

Region I and the state will be informed.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Air Force Radioisotope Committee at 11 a.m. (CST) on November 20, 1997. Region IV will inform NMSS.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 4 p.m. (CST), November 20, 1997.

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