

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

March 10, 1978

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF SAFEGUARDS EVENT--

PNS-78-10

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE national security or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IE staff as of this date.

FACILITY: General Electric Company
Vallecitos Nuclear Center
Pleasanton, California
DN: 70-754

SUBJECT: RECOVERED METAL DISCS POSSIBLY CONTAINING RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

At approximately 3:30 p.m., March 8, 1978, the licensee notified Region V (San Francisco) that they had been contacted by the Salinas, California Police Department which informed them that a woman, identified as the former wife of a laboratory technician currently employed at GE Vallecitos Nuclear Center (VNC), had attempted to sell some small metal discs which she claimed contained platinum to a pawn broker in Salinas. The pawn broker in attempting to verify her claim apparently developed the impression that the discs contained plutonium and contacted the Salinas Police Department. The woman when contacted by the police indicated that the discs came from VNC.

The woman when subsequently contacted by GE advised that she had sold 25 of the discs to a precious metals shop. The shop has made the discs available to VNC for appropriate analysis and measurement. Preliminary measurements indicate that only two of the 25 have trace amounts of radioactivity with the rest yielding no detectable radiation. GE is conducting an investigation of this matter.

Region V investigators are investigating the matter.

The Information Assessment Team has been notified.

The State of California has been notified. No press interest has been noted or is anticipated. No press releases are planned by either NRC or the licensee.

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