

November 15, 1999

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE** PNO-IV-99-055

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**

State Of Texas Licensee  
Price Construction  
Laredo, Texas  
License No: L05205

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

Subject: STOLEN PORTABLE MOISTURE/DENSITY GAUGE

On November 12, 1999, Price Construction, a State of Texas licensee, contacted the Texas Bureau of Radiation Control (TBRC) to notify them of the theft of one of their portable nuclear gauges.

The licensee reported that on November 11, 1999, a Troxler Model 3430 portable moisture/density gauge containing approximately 1,480 megabecquerels (40 millicuries) of americium-241 and approximately 296 megabecquerels (8 millicuries) of cesium-137, was stolen from the back of a licensee vehicle parked at a temporary job site location in Laredo, Texas. The licensee reported that the gauge was stored in its approved transportation container and was chained (locked) to the bed of the vehicle. After leaving the truck unattended for a short period of time, the gauge user returned and observed that the chain securing the device had been cut and the gauge had been stolen.

The licensee notified the local police department. TBRC is obtaining additional information and will monitor the licensee's efforts to recover the gauge.

The State of Texas was informed of the event by the licensee on November 11, 1999. TBRC notified the NRC Operations Center of the incident by facsimile at 4:52 p.m. (EST) on November 12, 1999.

Region IV has informed OSP, NMSS, OEDO and the I.A.T. This information is current as of 9:30 a.m. (CST) November 15, 1999.

Contact: Mark R. Shaffer (817)860-8287  
Linda McLean (817)860-8116

1E34