

November 30, 1999

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-99-052

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 I staff in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

Facility

Best Foods
Best Foods
99 Avenue A
P.O. Box 307
Bayonne, New Jersey 07002
License No: General Lic

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: STOLEN GENERALLY LICENSED GAUGE

On Monday, November 29, 1999, at 3:40 p.m., Best Foods notified the NRC Operations Center that a radioactive source containing 100 millicuries of americium-241 had been stolen. The americium-241 sealed source and fixed gauge device, a Filtec case inspector system, are generally licensed. The Filtec case inspector system is an Industrial Dynamics Company Model CI-2GV gauge. The licensee performs leak tests on the Filtec gauge on a 3 year frequency and had been attempting to do so when they were unable to locate it. The last wipe was done in 1996. A licensee representative remembers seeing the device in 1997.

According to the licensee, their facility was rebuilt in late 1986. At that time five high speed lines were installed. One line was never used and was dismantled in 1993. The Filtec gauge on the dismantled line was moved into storage in another building on site. The licensee stated that they have a good security system, but that it is possible that someone could have entered the storage area and removed the gauge.

The State of New Jersey has been notified. Region I is prepared to respond to media inquiries. This information is current as of 5:00 p.m. on November 29, 1999.

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