



NRC NEWS

Office of Public Affairs, Region I

King of Prussia, PA. 19406-2713

www.nrc.gov



No: I-19-015

July 2, 2019

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UPDATE: Tri-State Testing Lab has notified the NRC that the missing gauge has been found. It was not damaged. Further details are available from the Connecticut State Police.

NRC Notified of Theft of Nuclear Density Gauge in Connecticut

A Connecticut company has notified the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of the theft of a portable moisture-density gauge containing sealed sources of radioactive material.

Tri-State Testing Lab, LLC, of Berlin, Conn., reported that the gauge was locked in the trunk of a car that was stolen from an employee's Tolland, Conn., driveway on June 30. The device contains small amounts of cesium-137 and americium-241.



The gauge is used to make density measurements of soil by projecting the radiation from the two radioactive sources into the ground and then displaying the reflected radiation on a dial on its top.

The gauge, which is stored in a yellow protective transportation case, consists of a shielding container with a plunger-type handle protruding from the top. The handle is used to manually extend and then retract the radioactive sources from the shielded position. When not in use, the handle is normally locked, with the sources in the retracted, safely shielded position.

If the sources are in the shielded position, the gauge would present no hazard to the public. However, any attempt to tamper with the radioactive sources in the device could subject a person to radiation exposure. Handling of the unshielded sources outside the container would carry a risk of potentially dangerous radiation exposure.

Anyone who locates the gauge should not touch it and immediately report its location to the NRC's Operations Center at 301-816-5100, which is staffed 24 hours a day. Collect calls are accepted.

The Connecticut State Police are investigating the theft and may be contacted at 860-896-3200. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection was also notified.

Photo by Troxler Electronic Laboratories