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JUL 2 1959

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LOSS OF TRITIUM LUMINOUS MARKERS AT EASTMAN KODAK CO., ROCHESTER,
NEW YORK, LICENSE NO. 31-461-10

SYMBOL: INS:RSC

This office received on 6/25/59 a letter dated 6/12/59 from William L. Sutton, M.D., Secretary, Kodak Park Radiation Committee, Eastman Kodak Company. Sutton reported that a recent routine inventory revealed 11 luminous markers had been removed from equipment in one building at Kodak Park, Rochester, New York. The loss appeared to have occurred on three separate occasions in different areas sometime early in May 1959. The sources involved were all U.S. Radium Corporation Model #LAB-252 B-1 luminous buttons, each containing about 60 millicuries of H^3 on tritiated foil, and are possessed under License 31-461-10.

Sutton further reported a large number of personnel had access to the areas at about the time of the loss, but that all could readily be identified. All of these persons were contacted by Kodak management, and an attempt was made to induce voluntary return of the sources with promise of no prejudice to or identification of the taker. These efforts were unsuccessful, and the loss is felt to be permanent. Corrective action planned includes extension of educational activity to all persons entering areas of use of these markers and review of each marker's installation to ensure that easy removal is not possible.

This office contacted Sutton by telephone on 6/30/59, and the circumstances were confirmed to be as reported. There still has been no recovery of any of the sources, and it is felt even less likely now that any will be recovered. Sutton reported that he believes some construction personnel were involved and that general construction unemployment at the current time in the Rochester area led to fear of dismissal by the taker if he returned the sources.

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Additional information supplied by Sutton is as follows. About 900 tritium luminous markers are currently in use at Kodak Park, with first use of this type marker having begun about 10/57. Effort is made to secure the markers in place so that it will be quite difficult to remove them, one method being to deliberately jam the threads of any holding screws or bolts so they cannot be turned. The particular markers which were lost were firmly attached to brackets mounted on the corners of movable laboratory carts. The brackets themselves, however, were easily unscrewed from the carts, and the entire units were removed. No other mounted tritium sources are known to have been lost since they were first put into use. The only other known loss of such sources reportedly occurred about one year ago when two markers were removed from a supervisor's desk. These units were recovered within two days, and the incident was not regarded as one necessitating notification to the Commission.

Sutton does not feel that there is any significant radiation health hazard associated with loss of these units, and this office concurs. A visit has been scheduled to Kodak Park for the end of July, at which time the circumstances of the loss and the corrective action taken will be reviewed in detail.