

May 16, 2001

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-016

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 II staff (Atlanta, Georgia) on this date.

Facility

S&ME
(An Agreement State Licensee)
Greensboro, NC
License: 041-0922-1

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: Stolen Portable Gauge

The North Carolina Division of Radiation Protection (NCDRP) notified the NRC Operations Center on Tuesday, May 15, 2001 that the licensee had reported the theft or loss of a portable moisture density gauge. The gauge is a Troxler, model 3411B, serial number 14682, containing 8 millicuries (296 megabecquerels) of cesium-137 and 40 millicuries (1.48 gigabecquerels) of americium-241. The gauge was either lost or stolen sometime between the evening of Friday, May 11, 2001 and Saturday morning, May 12, 2001. On Saturday morning, the user of the gauge became aware that the gauge was missing from the back of his truck after driving a short distance from his residence. The licensee notified the local sheriff's office of the event and the sheriff's office notified the local office of the Emergency Management Agency. The NCDRP was not notified of the event until Monday, May 14, 2001.

Preliminary information indicates that the gauge's storage container was left unlocked, not properly secured in the vehicle, and the keys used to access the radioactive cesium source in the gauge were missing. The NCDRP has requested the licensee to issue a press release on the event. The police authorities have the event under investigation.

This information presented herein has been discussed with the State and is current as of 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, May 16, 2001.

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