

July 28, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-03-012

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

Rex Healthcare
(An Agreement State Licensee)
Raleigh, NC
License: 092-0160-1

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: MISSING BRACHYTHERAPY SEEDS

The North Carolina Division of Radiation Protection (the Division) notified the NRC Operations Center on Friday, July 25, 2003, that the licensee had reported losing five radioactive brachytherapy seeds. Each seed contained 14.2 megabecquerels (0.384 millicuries) of iodine-125, or a total of 70.3 megabecquerels (1.9 millicuries).

The licensee reported that on July 14, 2003, a brachytherapy procedure was performed using 106 seeds, and that seven seeds were not used in the procedure. Unused seeds are then sterilized and returned to the manufacturer. On July 22, 2003, the licensee discovered that five seeds were missing. The licensee believes that the five seeds had been loaded into an applicator which was not used in the procedure, and inadvertently disposed via the hospital trash. The licensee has performed surveys in their hospital, and are continuing the search at the local waste incinerator and the land fill. The Division has the event under investigation.

Region II received initial notification of this occurrence from the Operations Center. This information has been discussed with the State and is current as of, 10:00 a.m., Monday, July 28, 2003.

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