

October 5, 2006

THIS EVENT IS NOT FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE PER AGREEMENT STATE REQUEST UNTIL October 7, 2006

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-06-012

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 the Region IV staff on this date.

Facility

Goolsby Testing
Humble, TX

Texas Agreement State Licensee

Licensee Emergency Classification

☐ Notification of Unusual Event

☐ Alert

☐ Site Area Emergency

☐ General Emergency

☒ Not Applicable

SUBJECT: RADIOGRAPHER'S RADIATION DOSE IN EXCESS OF REGULATORY LIMITS

DESCRIPTION: On October 4, 2006, the state of Texas Department of State Health Services (the state) notified the NRC Operations Center of a radiation overexposure of a technician involved in radiography (EN 42874). The overexposure occurred when a 77 curie source of iridium-192 was not completely retracted into the radiography camera after use.

The state reported that after the technician had completed an exposure, he retracted the source to the camera. The technician noted the survey meter, located about 6 feet in front of the camera, was indicating a drop in the radiation levels. The technician disconnected the guide tube from the camera and moved it to a new location. Upon returning to pick up the camera, the technician noticed the source extending out of the camera. The technician immediately cranked or retracted the source into the camera a second time and notified his supervisor of the event. The supervisor instructed the technician to cease all work. The technician's pocket ion chamber was indicating a radiation reading of "off-scale." The technician's whole body badge was overnighed to the licensee's badge processor for emergency processing. On October 3, the processor reported an exposure of 16.543 rem deep dose equivalent (DDE). The technician's total dose for the year is reported as 19.538 rem DDE, an exposure in excess of the regulatory limit of 5 rem. The state of Texas is continuing to investigate the incident. It is not yet understood why the source was not completely retracted into the camera the first time.

NRC's Operations Center received notification of this occurrence from the state of Texas on October 4, 2006. Region IV has informed OEDO, NMSS, STP, and the Region's SLO and PAO. Region IV has been monitoring the state's activities related to the event and offered assistance, if needed. An International Nuclear Event Scale (INES) report on the radiation overexposure is being sent to the International Atomic Energy.

This information has been discussed with the state and is current as of 3:00 p.m., (CDT) on October 5, 2006.

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