

October 23, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-96-059

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 IV staff in Arlington, Texas on this date.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Dept. Health & Human Services	Notification of Unusual Event
National Institute Of Diabetes ...	Alert
4212 North 16th Street	Site Area Emergency
Phoenix, Arizona 85016	General Emergency
Dockets: 03001211 License No: 02-13990-01 X Not Applicable	

Subject: LOSS OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

At approximately 11 a.m., CDT, on October 22, 1996, the licensee notified the NRC Region IV Office of an apparent loss of 750 microcuries of phosphorus-32. The radioactive material was contained in a lucite trash container and consisted of approximately 2 cubic feet of contaminated waste, primarily paper, absorbents, and some plastic material. The container was specifically designed for routine holding of laboratory waste and was clearly labelled as containing radioactive materials. Four screws needed to be removed to empty the boxed waste inside the lucite container. The licensee first noticed the missing waste on October 10, 1996, and from interviews of the eight users of the laboratory, the licensee concluded the waste was removed on October 8, 1996. The laboratory is locked, and entry is made by using a card key. The licensee's investigation has determined that a new janitorial service had been contracted a few days prior to the missing waste. The RSO had not been notified of this change, and the new janitorial staff had not been trained on radioactive material control. The licensee has twice interviewed the four to five janitorial staff members, but none have admitted to emptying the container. The licensee has no reason to believe that anyone else would have emptied the container. The licensee has conducted radiation and contamination surveys, including the janitorial closet, the dumpster, and the involved laboratory. No contamination was found. The licensee believes the dumpster was emptied prior to being surveyed. The licensee has completed training of the new janitorial staff and plans to make a 30-day written report.

Due to the form and limited quantity of material involved, it is unlikely that this situation creates a significant health and safety risk.

The state of Arizona has been informed.

The information herein has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 4 p.m., CST, October 22, 1996.

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