

December 19, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-96-069

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.

Facility

Syncor International Corporation
St. Paul, Mn Nuclear Pharmacy
1045 Westgate Drive, Suite 100
St. Paul, Minnesota
Dockets: 03033224
License No: 04-26507-01MD

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: SYNCOR RADIOPHARMACY CONTAMINATED SHIPPING CONTAINER

On December 18, 1996, Mercy Hospital, a Region III licensee in the St. Paul, Minnesota area, received a radiopharmaceutical shipment from the Syncor International Corporation radiopharmacy, a Region IV multi-site licensee, in St. Paul, Minnesota. The shipping container, containing technetium-99m radiopharmaceutical doses, was surveyed and wiped for contamination by the hospital nuclear medicine department upon receipt from Syncor. Analysis of the wipe sample by the hospital revealed a contamination reading of approximately 124,000 counts per minute from a small spot on the shipping container latch. Neither the hospital nor Syncor personnel identified additional contamination at their respective facilities or in the Syncor delivery vehicle. Syncor had performed required package surveys prior to shipment early on the morning of December 18th and detected no contamination above natural background. Region III has been notified and has dispatched an inspector to review the incident with hospital and pharmacy personnel. Region III will keep Region IV informed of the inspector's findings concerning both facilities. Nearly identical package contamination incidents have been detected and reported by the hospital nuclear medicine department on two previous occasions since September 16, 1996.

The state of Minnesota will be informed by Region III.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Syncor Corporate Radiation Safety Office at 1:45 p.m. (PST), December 18, 1996. Region IV notified Region III of the incident at approximately 2:00 p.m. (PST) on December 18, 1996.

The information herein has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 4:00 p.m., PST, December 18, 1996.

Contact: Jim Montgomery Linda Howell
(510)975-0249 (817)890-8213

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PDR I&E
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