

December 20, 1996

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE**

PNO-IV-96-070

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**

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

Department Of The Air Force

Notification of Unusual Event

Newark Air Force Base

Alert

8901 18th Street

Site Area Emergency

San Antonio, Texas 78235

General Emergency

Dockets: 03028641 License No: 42-23539-01af X Not Applicable

Subject: MAGNESIUM-THORIUM ALLOY INADVERTENTLY SOLD TO SCRAP YARD

On December 19, 1996, the licensee notified the Region IV office, Arlington, Texas, that the Defense Logistic Agency (DLA) located in Columbus, Ohio, inadvertently sold compacted and baled scrap metal containing magnesium-thorium alloy to Autojumble Salvage Yard in Mansfield, Ohio. Approximately 3,000 pounds of scrap metal was sold to the scrap yard owner in February 1994.

The scrap yard owner was made aware of the radioactive material in the scrap metal when he recently attempted to sell the material to another dealer. Radiation monitors at the second dealer's scrap yard detected the magnesium-thorium. At the time of this report, the USAF did not know what the magnesium-thorium had been contained in since the material was compacted and baled. The USAF and the DLA are trying to determine whether this material came from the USAF or from other military activities. This material is regulated under the provisions of 10 CFR 40.13.

The USAF will provide Region IV with additional information on the event when available.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Department of the Air Force, Radioisotope Committee at 1:00 p.m. CST December 19, 1996. Updated information was provided to Region IV at approximately 5:00 p.m.

This information is complete as of 5:00 p.m. CST on December 19, 1996. Region IV has informed Regions II and III.

This information has been confirmed with a representative USAF.

Contact: M. Linda McLean      Linda Howell  
(817)860-8116      (817)860-8213

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