

October 16, 1996

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE** PNO-IV-96-056

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**

Department Of The Army  
White Sands Missile Range  
New Mexico 88002-5048  
Dockets: 03005480  
License No: 30-02405-05

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

Subject: DAMAGED SHIPPING PACKAGE

Roadway Express, a freight hauler, notified the National Response Center that they had been informed by the licensee regarding damage to a shipping container that had been delivered on October 16, 1996. The damage was noted by the licensee after the hauler had departed the licensee's site.

A licensee representative was contacted by the NRC Region IV Office on October 16, 1996, at 3:00 p.m. CT. The licensee stated that the package consisted of a radiographic exposure device in a wooden overpack, the latter of which appeared to have been penetrated by a forklift truck prong. No damage to the device is expected, but Roadway was requested by the licensee to return to the site, to note the damage, and to be present when the overpack is removed. Their arrival is expected no later than October 17, 1996. After this further review of the damage, the licensee committed to report to Region IV.

The device was identified as an Amersham Model 680B exposure device shipped from the manufacturer and containing a 99-curie cobalt-60 source. The shipping papers identified the transport index as 1.0 millirems per hour (i.e., 1.0 mrem per hour at 1 meter); however, the licensee measured 1.8 millirems and suspects that the device may have shifted on the pallet on which it is mounted causing an increase on one side. The licensee reported measuring a contact dose rate on the crate of 25 millirems per hour and no detectable contamination.

NMSS and the State of New Mexico has been informed. This information has been confirmed with a licensee representative.

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