

February 7, 1997

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-97-009**

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>
U.S. Air Force	Notification of Unusual Event
Davis Monthan Air Force Base	Alert
McClellan Air Force Base	Site Area Emergency
Brooks Air Force Base	General Emergency
San Antonio, Texas 78228	X Not Applicable
Dockets: 03028641 License No: 42-23539-01AF	

Subject: LOSS OF GENERALLY LICENSED DEVICE AND DISCOVERY OF LICENSED MATERIAL IN AN UNRESTRICTED AREA (EVENT NUMBERS: 31741/31742)

On February 6, 1997, a representative of the U.S. Air Force Radioisotope Committee (RIC) provided telephone notification to the Region IV office of two incidents reported to the RIC by U.S. Air Force permittees.

The first incident involved discovery of the loss of a self-illuminated exit sign at Davis Monthan Air Force Base (AFB) in Tuscon, Arizona. The exit sign was previously located in a building on base (building number was not known) and contained approximately 20 curies of tritium. The sign was discovered missing when base personnel performed an inventory of self-illuminated exit signs as part of an ongoing effort to identify the location of generally licensed signs and to inventory them periodically. This effort was initiated in response to an earlier discovery of several missing exit signs at the base. At the time of the report, the disposition of the sign was unknown, although RIC representatives suspected that the sign may have been removed during building renovations in January 1996.

The second incident involved discovery of two foil sources in an unrestricted area of McClellan AFB in Sacramento, California. A RIC representative reported that while working on removal of all material from the Environmental Management Building, an individual found a small box containing two foil sources encased in epoxy. The sources were marked indicating that they contained strontium-90. Based on initial evaluation, the permittee estimated that the total activity of the sources was approximately 1 millicurie. The epoxy covering the foil sources had deteriorated and was crumbling when the sources were found. The individual who initially located the sources removed them from the box, handling them without gloves or other protection, and subsequently ate a doughnut. The sources were retrieved by the base radiation protection officer who performed removable contamination surveys and did not identify any removable contamination. (The base radiation protection officer reported that a thin layer of epoxy still covered the sources.) In a subsequent telephone conversation, the RIC informed Region IV that the base radiation protection officer plans to perform a dose evaluation for the individual who handled the sources.

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The states of Arizona and California will be informed.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the Air Force Radioisotope Committee at 4 p.m. (CST) on February 6, 1997. Updated information was obtained from the RIC on February 7, 1997. Region IV has informed NMSS.

This information herein has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 9 a.m. (CST), February 7, 1997.

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