

February 11, 1997

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-97-010

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>
Sheffield Steel, Sand Springs, Ok	Notification of Unusual Event
Sheffield Steel, Sand Springs, Ok	Alert
Sand Spring, Oklahoma	Site Area Emergency
License No: 35-19883-01	General Emergency
	X Not Applicable

Subject: NUCLEAR GAUGE FOUND AT SCRAP YARD

Sheffield Steel notified NRC Region IV that their radiation screening equipment had detected a radiation source in a scrap shipment in an incoming rail car on Friday, February 7. A Sheffield representative performed a survey reading with a Ludlum Model 3 survey instrument and detected 200 mR/h at contact with the device. He described the device as a cylinder with a 6-inch diameter and an 8-inch length. The device has been isolated and secured at the licensee's site.

A tag on the device identifies it as a Texas Nuclear Model 5190 gauge containing 200 millicuries of cesium-137. Other information included on the tag is as follows: serial number B2829, tag number DE/DX/DT-4496, date 11/80, and series number SC. Region IV has requested the manufacturer, Texas Nuclear, to attempt a trace on the owner by means of the serial number.

The gauge is mounted on an I-beam segment, is significantly damaged, and was found with its shutter open. However, the Sheffield representative was able to partially close the shutter and reduce the dose rate to below 5 mR/h at contact.

The rail car shipment containing the device originated at 12th Street Scrap, Joplin, Missouri. After the screening equipment at Sheffield Steel detected the radiation levels from the rail car, the car was moved some distance down the spur and became derailed. A nearby contractor was used to offload the scrap onto a truck and move the material to an onsite pile. Contractor workers have expressed concern regarding the exposure they might have received during the scrap transfer work. Their exposures are estimated to be low but possibly in excess of the 100-millirem dose limit for members of the public.

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A Region IV inspector is being dispatched to the site and is expected to arrive midday on February 11.

Region IV has informed NMSS and AEOD. The states of Oklahoma and Texas have also been informed.

Region IV received initial notification of this occurrence by telephone from Sheffield Steel at 11:38 a.m. CST, February 10, 1997. This information is complete as of 8 a.m. CST on February 11, 1997.

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