

May 20, 1997

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-97-049

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 III staff (Lisle, Illinois) on this date.

Facility
ANHEUSER-BUSCH, INC.
Anheuser-Busch, Inc.
St. Louis, Missouri
License No: GENERAL LICN

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

30-14029

Subject: MISSING AMERICIUM-241 SOURCE

On May 16, 1997, the licensee's consultant notified the NRC that two level measuring gauges, each containing a sealed 100 millicuries (3.7 Gbq) americium-241 source, had been missing since approximately May 5, 1997. The gauges were part of a packaging line which had been discontinued and was scheduled for removal.

On May 16, 1997, the licensee's Radiation Safety Officer discovered the gauges missing when he went to the packaging line to verify that they were still in place. The licensee initiated a search and contacted a health physics company as a consultant to assist in the recovery efforts. The consultants were able to identify that Rimco, a local metal scrap yard used by the licensee, was a possible location for the missing gauges. A search at the scrap yard resulted in finding one of the missing gauges. The gauge housing was found separated from the source housing. The source housing was not damaged. The gauge housing of the second missing gauge was found but the radioactive source was missing. The licensee is continuing to search for the one missing americium-241 source.

An NRC Region III (Chicago) inspector was dispatched to the site on May 16, 1997, to review the circumstances of the missing gauges. The inspector will also be at the licensee's facility during the week of May 19, 1997, to continue the monitoring of the licensee's recovery actions. The State of Missouri and the NRC Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards has been notified. The information is this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this event at 4:00 p.m. (CDT) on May 16, 1997. This information is current as of 12:00 pm (CDT) on May 19, 1997.

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