

July 20, 1999

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-99-034

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 I staff (King of Prussia, Pennsylvania) on this date.

Facility

E. R. Squibb & Sons, Inc.,
E. R. Squibb & Sons, Inc.
One Squibb Drive
P.O. Box 191
New Brunswick, New Jersey
Dockets: 03005222 License No: 29-00139-02

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: PACKAGE CONTAINING 4.9 MILLICURIES OF IODINE-131 CAPSULES-
LOST AND FOUND

On July 19, 1999, the Radiation Safety Officer for E.R. Squibb & Sons, Inc., (Squibb), informed the NRC that a package containing 4.9 millicuries of iodine-131 (I-131) was apparently missing. The package holding two containers, each with one capsule containing I-131, was a non-routine order for North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, Long Island, NY. The package was a Radioactive II shipment, with a Yellow-II label and it had a Transport Index (TI) of 0.5. On July 20, 1999, the Radiation Safety Officer reported that the package was recovered.

On July 19, a courier, E. Elblink, arrived in a truck with a "radioactive materials" placard, at the Squibb facility in New Brunswick, NJ, at 9:37 a.m. and left with the package at 10:10 a.m. This courier had picked up another package from Squibb on Friday, July 16 for air shipment. A courier from DelMed arrived at 10:55 a.m. on the 19th to pick up the package for North Shore University Hospital. At that time, Squibb initiated an investigation, and confirmed that DelMed had not sub-contracted with E. Elblink to pick up the package and had no knowledge of this individual. Squibb also confirmed that North Shore University Hospital had not received the material. The Squibb security office had records of the license plate number of the E. Elblink truck, and contacted the individual courier to recover the package late on July 19. The courier's orders from the previous Friday had not been changed, so he returned to Squibb to get a package on Monday, which he delivered to the warehouse in Newark, NJ where he had taken Friday's package. Squibb security recovered the I-131 package from the warehouse at 5:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 20, 1999.

The States of New Jersey and New York have been notified.

The Region I Office of Public Affairs is prepared to respond to media inquiries. Region I will follow-up on the licensee's actions to recover the material.

This PN is current as of 4:15 p.m. on July 19, 1999.

Contact: E. Ullrich
(610)337-5040