

February 1, 2000

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-00-005

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 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
Pennsylvania State University	Notification of Unusual Event
Pennsylvania State University	Alert
University Park, Pennsylvania	Site Area Emergency
Dockets: 99990001 License No: General	General Emergency
	X Not Applicable

Subject: THEFT OF A SELF-LUMINESCENT EXIT SIGN CONTAINING TRITIUM

At 4:52 p.m. on January 31, 2000, the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) of Pennsylvania State University notified the NRC Operations Center that an exit sign containing hydrogen 3 (tritium) was stolen from a building on the New Kensington Campus.

In response to a follow-up by Region I, the RSO stated that the missing exit sign was installed in a classroom, and the janitor assigned to the classroom remembered the sign being in place in the early morning of Friday, January 28, 2000. The sign was noted missing in the afternoon of January 31, 2000. He also stated that the sign was an NRD model with serial number 119704, and contained 19 curies of tritium.

The Licensee is in a process of replacing all such exit signs with those that do not contain radioactive material at the New Kensington Campus. The RSO stated that notices requesting return of the stolen sign, with a promise of amnesty, are being posted in buildings on the New Kensington Campus.

This information is current as of 9:00 a.m., February 1, 2000. Region I is continuing its follow-up of the event.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been informed of the event. Region I is prepared to respond to inquiries by the media.

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