



NRC NEWS

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Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

Email: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC ASKS FOR HELP IN LOCATING MISSING RADIOACTIVE SOURCE IN PHILADELPHIA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is asking for help in locating a missing radioactive source in the Philadelphia area. The source is one of two that had been inside a gauge stolen from a South Philadelphia construction site last Monday.

One source was found with pieces of the gauge at Nicetown Salvage Company in the city's Nicetown section last Thursday. A second source - an americium-241 source bolted to the aluminum 9- inch-by-15-inch baseplate of the gauge - was not with the other pieces and has not been found.

The NRC and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Sunday afternoon asked a special Department of Energy team which has more sensitive radiation detection/monitoring equipment to assist in the search.

Last week, a shipment of aluminum was sent from the Nicetown company to a processing facility in Camden, N.J. Since it was possible the source could have been part of that shipment, NRC and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection staff members searched this location over the weekend, with negative results. The DOE Radiological Assistance Program teams searched the original construction site, the Nicetown and Camden sites and a route in between the two sites today, but did not find the source.

The material is only dangerous to a member of the public if ingested or inhaled or the source container is completely disassembled and the source remains in contact with the skin continuously for several days.

"Our primary concern is protecting people and the environment," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "We are asking anyone who knows the whereabouts of the source to contact the NRC."

Thefts of industrial gauges such as the one stolen last week typically occur when they are mistaken for high-end tool boxes. Thieves often attempt to sell the devices for their scrap metal value, unaware of the contents. Photographs of a similar gauge and source are included.

Anyone with information is asked to call the NRC at 301/816-5100.

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