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Subject- Yellow Alert- Loss of Control of Radioactive Material

**Title- Yellow Alert- Loss of Control of Radioactive Material**

Identifier 2000-KO-SNL-15000-0001 Date 4/6/00

**Summary-** Improper transport of 8 sealed sources results in Loss of Control of Radioactive Material. The 8 sealed sources were contained in two carrying cases which were stolen from a privately owned vehicle and discovered in the yard of a private residence in Rio Rancho, New Mexico.

**Discussion-** On Friday, March 31, 2000, the Rio Rancho police department responded to a report of radioactive material found in the yard of a private residence. The New Mexico Environment Department was contacted and traced the sources to Sandia National Laboratories. The sources were plated, Pu-239 calibration sources ranging in activity from 700 dpm to 847,000 dpm. The sources were contained in two wooden boxes with four sources per box. The boxes, in addition to each source, were labeled "Caution, Radioactive Material." The sources had been in the possession of an employee of SNL. The individual had assumed that since the sources had been delivered via regular mail, they were not hazardous and therefore no controls were required for their storage or transport. The individual placed the sources in a private vehicle with the intent of transporting them to Los Alamos National Laboratory. The individual stopped to drop off some items and the sources were stolen from the vehicle at that time.

**Analysis-** The individual made a judgement, based upon the original delivery method, that there were no controls required for the storage and transport of these sources. Personnel should be aware that controls for the use, handling, and storage of radioactive material are addressed in the Radiological Protection Procedures Manual (RPPM). Also, any radioactive material, regardless of form or quantity, is subject to strict material management requirements as stated in the ES&H Manual.

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References Radiological Protection Procedures Manual, ES&H Manual  
DOE Functional Category PT, RP