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STOLEN NUCLEAR GAUGE FOUND IN PHILADELPHIA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has been notified that a nuclear gauge reported stolen from a construction site in Philadelphia on Monday has been located at a facility in the city's Nicetown section. The gauge was found yesterday morning at Nicetown Salvage Co. on Germantown Avenue near Lycoming Street. Radiation surveys conducted by the NRC and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection did not detect contamination in the building. At no time was public health and safety in danger.

The gauge, containing small amounts of radioactive material, is used for industrial purposes such as measuring the density of soil at construction sites. On Monday (March 19), Underwood Engineering, of Belmar, N.J., reported the gauge and its bright-yellow transportation case were stolen from a truck parked at a construction site at 3301 Tasker St., Philadelphia.

Underwood Engineering is arranging to recover the gauge. NRC inspectors will monitor the removal of the gauge and will also confirm that all radioactive material has been removed. In the meantime, the gauge is safely stored inside the salvage company building. Access to the building is being controlled. Five individuals who were in the building were taken to the hospital yesterday as a precaution. The hospital verified that they were not contaminated.

The NRC will conduct a follow-up inspection at Underwood Engineering to determine whether the gauge owner had implemented all regulatory requirements to minimize the potential for theft and to assure that appropriate actions are taken to prevent recurrence.

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