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**RON CURRY**  
SECRETARY

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Environment Department Investigating Theft of Construction Gauge**

(Santa Fe, NM) -- The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Radiation Control Bureau (RCB) was notified on Monday, October 4 that a piece of construction site equipment containing two sealed radioactive sources has been stolen from Española. The Campbell Pacific Nuclear (CPN) gauge, model MC-3, serial number M30069661, is the property of Riverside Technologies. It is commonly used to test moisture and density of construction materials such as asphalt, dirt and concrete. The gauge was taken from inside its transport container some time between Friday night, October 1, and 7:00 a.m. Monday morning, October 4.

The radioactive sources in the gauge are hazardous. One source of radiation is a 10 millicurie Cesium-137 source, and the other is a 50 millicurie Americium-241/Beryllium source. Prolonged exposure of the body to the radiation field can cause burns and tissue damage. Ingestion of the radioactive materials can cause extensive organ damage, and can be lethal.

If the gauge is found, it should not be handled. Do not tamper with the gauge or any of its parts, especially the source rod. The safest course of action is to keep a distance of at least fifteen feet from the gauge and immediately contact the following people:

John Parker, NMED Radiation Control Bureau Chief, (505) 827-1080; Howard Poshard, Radiation Safety Officer, Riverside Technologies, (505) 753-1277; or Environment Department emergency number, (505) 827-9329, non-emergency: (505) 428-2500, or voice mail: 1-866-428-6535

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Colorado and Utah radiation authorities have been notified. The manufacturer of the device has also been notified.

Unlawful possession of radioactive material is a violation of the New Mexico Radiation Protection Regulations (20.3 NMAC) and violators are subject to fines. A gauge cannot be transferred or sold without filing legal paperwork.

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This is a picture of a Campbell Pacific Nuclear (CPN) Model MC-3 gauge with the source rod in the "safe" position. One radioactive source is located inside the base portion of the container near the bottom towards the right, and the other is located in the bottom of the upright metal source rod on the right. If the upright metal rod is extended below the bottom of the gauge, more serious exposures could occur.

“We don’t wish to alarm the public, only to ask them to be on the lookout for this gauge and to contact us if they think they may have seen it or have any information on its whereabouts,” said John Parker, NMED Radiation Control Bureau Chief. “The public’s knowledge and involvement is often key in these cases.”

For additional information, contact John Parker with the Radiation Control Bureau at (505) 827-1080 or Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0260.

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