

NNSA Recovers More than 15,000 Radioactive Sources From Around the United States

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced today that it has achieved a significant milestone by recovering and securing more than 15,000 radioactive sources from around the United States. These materials, some of which could potentially be used in a "dirty bomb," are recovered as part of NNSA's efforts to protect the country from the potential misuse of radioactive materials by terrorists or other criminals.



"One of NNSA's top priorities is removing, securing and disposing of materials that pose a national security risk. It is important that we protect the public from material that could be misused before it becomes a problem," said NNSA Acting Administrator Bill Ostendorff. "This is a tremendous achievement that illustrates one piece of our comprehensive strategy to keep dangerous material out of the hands of dangerous people."

Through NNSA's Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI), the radioactive sources are recovered by NNSA's Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) from commercial firms and academic institutions after the sources are determined to be excess and unwanted, and when there is no other disposition path. NNSA's source recovery efforts involve reporting to the proper state radiation safety agencies and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.



NNSA's source recovery program works around the United States to remove and securely manage radioactive materials that could be at risk for theft or diversion for use in a radiological dispersal device, or dirty bomb. The program recovers and secures excess, unwanted, or abandoned radioactive sealed sources and other radioactive material. Sources containing radioactive plutonium, americium, californium, cesium, cobalt, iridium, radium, and strontium have been recovered from medical, educational, agricultural, research and industrial facilities throughout the nation. Since 1999, the program has secured more than 15,000 radioactive sources from around the country.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a separately organized agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad. Visit www.nnsa.doe.gov for more information.

Contact:

NNSA Public Affairs (202) 586-7371