National Nuclear Security Administration NEWS

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NNSA Recovers High-Activity Radioactive Sources from Warehouse 25 Miles from New York City

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced that it has successfully completed the recovery of two high-activity Cesium-137 devices from a warehouse located approximately 25 miles from Manhattan in Rahway, New Jersey. NNSA recovered these disused and unwanted irradiators as part of its Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI). The devices, which contained more than 3,000 curies of Cs-137 at the time of their recovery, were used for medical research during their useful life.

"Properly disposing of more than 3,000 curies of Cesium eliminates the threat this material poses if lost or stolen and used in a dirty bomb," said NNSA Administrator Thomas P. D'Agostino. "This recovery is part of NNSA's comprehensive strategy to keep dangerous nuclear and radiological material safe and secure and protect the American people by further enhancing our nation's nuclear security."

Every year, thousands of sources become disused and unwanted in the United States. While secure storage is a temporary measure, the longer sources remain disused or unwanted, the greater the chance that they will become unsecured or abandoned. Due to their high activity and portability, radioactive sealed sources such as these irradiators could be used in radiological dispersal devices (RDD), commonly referred to as "dirty bombs." An attack using an RDD could result in extensive economic loss, significant social disruption and potentially serious public health problems.

As part of NNSA's nuclear security mission, GTRI works to reduce and protect vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials located at sites worldwide. To date, NNSA has recovered more than 24,000 disused and unwanted radioactive sealed sources containing more than 768,000 curies of activity. One of the program's core goals is to remove and dispose of excess nuclear and radiological materials, resulting in permanent threat reduction. GTRI is part of NNSA's comprehensive nuclear nonproliferation efforts currently at work in over 100 countries around the world to detect, secure and dispose of dangerous nuclear and radiological material.

GTRI's source recovery activities are implemented by Los Alamos National Laboratory (www.lanl.gov) , Idaho National Laboratory (www.inl.gov) and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors.

For more information on GTRI and NNSA's work to reduce and protect vulnerable nuclear and radiological material click here (/nuclear_nonproliferation/print/nuclear_radiological_material_removal.htm) .

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Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy

responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science in the nation's national security enterprise. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability, and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; reduces the 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 http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/ (http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/) for more information.