



Published on *National Nuclear Security Administration* (<http://www.nnsa.energy.gov>)

[Home](#) > [Media Room](#) > [Press Releases](#) > NNSA Achieves Major Milestone in Radioactive Source Security

# NNSA Achieves Major Milestone in Radioactive Source Security

## Release Date:

March 23, 2012

Washington, D.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced this month the recovery of the 30,000th disused and unwanted radioactive source. The NNSA's Global Threat Reduction Initiative's (GTRI) milestone of 30,000 sources represents a total of more than 825,000 curies of radioactivity. These sources were recovered in partnership with Los Alamos National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors [1] from sites throughout the United States.

The 30,000th source was one of several hundred disused unwanted sealed sources packaged and removed from a licensed facility in North Carolina. Because there are no commercial disposition options, NNSA/GTRI routinely recovers radioactive sources no longer in use from companies licensed by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) or an Agreement State in the interest of national security, public health and safety. Facility operators partner with NNSA to safely and securely remove the sources once they are no longer needed.

Every year, hundreds of sources become disused and unwanted in the United States. Secure storage at the site where the sources are located is a temporary measure, but the longer sources remain disused or unwanted, the greater the chance that they will become abandoned or security will lapse. Due to their high activity and portability, some radioactive sealed sources could be used in radiological dispersal devices (RDD), commonly referred to as "dirty bombs." An attack using an RDD could result in significant economic impacts, radiation exposure, and considerable social disruption. Removal of radiological sources contributes to NNSA's nonproliferation mission.

"This marks an important milestone for NNSA and GTRI," said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Anne Harrington. "GTRI's domestic work to reduce the threat of dirty bombs is comprehensive in scope, well-coordinated with

other agencies, states and the private sector, and results oriented.”

GTRI's work to remove and protect nuclear and radiological materials at civilian sites worldwide, as well as convert research reactors that operate on those materials, directly supports President Obama's goal to prevent the acquisition and use of dangerous materials in weapons of mass destruction and other forms of terrorism. Domestically, NRC and Agreement States are responsible for the safety and security of licensed sources and meeting the current regulatory requirements. However, NNSA has been working collaboratively with the NRC and Agreement States and their licensees to provide voluntary opportunities to further enhance the security of their sources and devices and incorporate best practices as applicable and appropriate.

Follow NNSA News on our [Blog](#) [2] and on [Facebook](#) [3], [Twitter](#) [4], [Tumblr](#) [5], [YouTube](#) [6], and [Flickr](#) [7].

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. 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.



[NNSA Policies](#) [Site Map](#)

[Site Feedback](#) [Department of Energy](#)

**Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 26, 2012*):** <http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/mediaroom/pressreleases/radsource32312>

**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.crcpd.org/>
- [2] <http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/blog>
- [3] <http://www.facebook.com/nnsanews>
- [4] <http://www.twitter.com/nnsanews>
- [5] <http://nnsanews.tumblr.com/>
- [6] <http://www.youtube.com/nnsanews>
- [7] <http://www.flickr.com/nnsanews>