RELATED TERMS

- Exercise
- Preventive Radiological Detection Program

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LESSON LEARNED

PRIMARY DISCIPLINES

- Emergency Management
- Hazardous Material

Pre-Incident Identification: Training Personnel on the Use of Radiation Detection Equipment

SUMMARY

State and local organizations should ensure that personnel who might detect radioactive materials during routine screening operations receive appropriate training on radiation detection instruments and related software. This training can help users operate this equipment efficiently.

DESCRIPTION

On November 9 and 10, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office sponsored the Southeast Transportation Corridor Pilot (SETCP) Technology Demonstration 2006 exercise. This exercise tested participants' ability to prevent a radiological or nuclear emergency by detecting concealed radioactive sources. Personnel were asked to screen commercial trucks and cargo containers with fixed and portable radiation detection equipment in use at vehicle weigh stations and port security facilities. Following detection of a radioactive source, participants were required to adjudicate the alarm and to activate appropriate Regional Reach-Back capabilities. Personnel from several federal departments and agencies as well as from the states of Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee participated in the exercise.

During this exercise, some personnel were unfamiliar with specific capabilities of the radiation detection instruments in use at the vehicle weigh stations and port security facilities. As a result, participants at times were unable to screen the shipments effectively and/or to locate and identify all radioactive sources. For instance, Kentucky Vehicle Enforcement personnel were able to identify only two out of three sources concealed on a truck. This lack of knowledge about one of the sources did not compromise ensuing operations. However, the SETCP Technology Demonstration 2006 after-action report (AAR) noted that personnel should identify all the sources in order to formulate effective response actions. The AAR concluded that "for most, this was due to a lack of training or familiarity with the equipment and software."

State and local organizations should ensure that personnel who might detect radioactive materials during routine screening operations receive appropriate training on radiation detection instruments and related software. This training can help users operate this equipment efficiently.

CITATION

Department of Homeland Security, Domestic Nuclear Detection Office. *Southern Transportation Corridor Pilot (SETCP) Technology Demonstration November 8-9, 2006*. 01 Mar 2007.
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