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LESSON LEARNED

Law Enforcement: Securing Vehicle and Driver during Radiological Screening

SUMMARY

Law enforcement personnel must secure both driver and vehicle during radiological screening if the shipment transported is suspected to be illicit. This can help officers protect the public as well as the cargo.

DESCRIPTION

On November 8-9, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security 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 law enforcement personnel did not secure all cargo and drivers throughout the radiological screening process. For instance, Tennessee state troopers conducting a truck inspection questioned the driver while he was still in his vehicle. The officers asked the driver to step out of the cab and checked for additional occupants only after they had completed a preliminary radiological survey of the vehicle. Furthermore, the troopers did not remove the driver's cell phone, secure the truck, or keep the vehicle in their line of sight during ensuing operations. At one point, the truck was left unguarded and was later hidden behind another vehicle. The SETCP Technology Demonstration 2006 after-action report concluded that "during an event where the cargo is suspected to be illicit, the driver and vehicle must be secured in order to protect the cargo and the public."

Law enforcement personnel must secure both driver and vehicle during radiological screening if the shipment transported is suspected to be illicit. This can help officers protect the public as well as the cargo.

CITATION

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

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