

August 29, 2002

MEMORANDUM TO: William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Martin J. Virgilio, Director **/RA/**
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

SUBJECT: DOCUMENT FOR SESSION III OF THE SENIOR
REGULATORS' MEETING, "REGULATING SEALED
RADIOACTIVE SOURCES"

Attached is a short document that discusses the major issues encountered during the last year involving the regulation of sealed radioactive sources. This document was prepared to support your participation in Session III, "Regulating Sealed Radioactive Sources," of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Senior Regulators' Meeting on September 17, 2002. Recent activities and achievements associated with enhancing the security of radioactive sources are highlighted in the document.

Attachment: As stated

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(301) 415-5847

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Regulating Sealed Radioactive Sources

William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Following the events of September 11, 2001, a new imperative for the regulation of sealed radioactive sources emerged; preventing a terrorist attack against or using radioactive sources. Considerable effort has been expended in the United States to identify and address potential vulnerabilities with the security of radioactive sources to prevent their being used as a weapon of terror. Of paramount importance has been not losing sight of our fundamental mission of protecting public health and safety, and of our licensees' primary responsibility of ensuring the safe operation of their facilities. This effort has presented a number of challenges, with both international implications and issues unique to the regulatory environment in the United States before September 11, 2001.

Primary activities and accomplishments in this area over the past year, some of which are ongoing, include:

- Additional staffing of emergency operations centers to respond to nuclear emergencies,
- Advising licensees on means to enhance their security programs to increase physical security, heighten access controls, and quickly communicate suspicious activities and potential threats to law enforcement and regulatory authorities,
- Coordinating with the Office of Homeland Security, established by President Bush to evaluate the vulnerabilities of the nation's infrastructure, and other Federal and State agencies to address security issues, provide our licensees with timely information about potential security threats, and to improve US readiness for a potential attack involving radioactive materials,
- Creation of the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response within the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission to focus and centralize security activities and responsibilities,
- Continued participation on the development of the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources,
- Implementing interim security requirements for licensees possessing higher risk radioactive sources, including enhancements for alarms, guards, barriers, access controls, monitoring, tracking, searches, background checks, and emergency preparedness, and for the transport of large quantities of radioactive material,
- Undertaking a comprehensive review of our physical security and safeguards requirements and policies, to identify and develop in cooperation with other Federal and State regulatory agencies new regulations and procedures to maintain a heightened level of security, and
- Developing a regulatory framework to further enhance the control of radioactive sources and increase their safety and security by reducing the number of incidents involving inadequate control of sources domestically and internationally. This will include enhancing controls over exports and imports, life cycle management, and developing a national system for tracking radioactive sources. Inclusion in the national tracking system will be based on an assessment of threat and potential consequences.