

Categories of Cesium-137 Sources Defined in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources

IAEA Category	Threshold Quantities of Cesium-137 (curies)	Examples of Use
Category 1	2,700.0	Food Irradiators
Category 2 ¹	27.0	Brachytherapy (medical)
Category 3	2.7	Well logging
Category 4	0.027	Moisture gauges
Category 5	< 0.027	
Examples of NRC regulatory limits within Category 5:		
Quantity above which NRC's general license tracking system applies to generally-licensed devices containing cesium-137	\$ 0.010	Thickness gauges
Exempt quantity	0.00001 ²	One radiation detector check source purchased by GAO (GAO used 15 such sources during its border investigation) ³

¹ Import of sources containing cesium-137 (or any of 15 other radionuclides) in Category 1 or 2 quantities requires a specific import license.

² This is a quantity below which persons are exempt from NRC licensing requirements. It is 2,700,000 times less than the Category 2 threshold for risk-significant sources, above which NRC has issued Orders for enhanced safety and security of radioactive sources, and for which NRC is developing a National Source Tracking System to track risk-significant sources, as recommended by the IAEA Code of Conduct. However, many devices containing cesium-137 sources above this 0.00001 curie threshold are generally licensed pursuant to 10 CFR 31.5(a). Generally licensed devices containing cesium-137 sources above 0.01 curies are subject to annual registration under NRC's general license tracking system (10 CFR 31.5(b)(13)).

³ GAO holds a specific license from NRC to possess multiple sources that may each contain slightly more than an exempt quantity.