

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT ON THE REGULATION AND CONTROL OF RADIOLOGICAL MATERIAL

In December 2002, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a national review of the regulation, reporting and security around the storage, sale and handling of hazardous materials. The review has been conducted in four parts covering ammonium nitrate, radiological, biological and chemical materials.

On 13 April 2007, COAG agreed to the recommendations from the Report on the Regulation and Control of Radiological Material. These include regulating the secure storage, possession, use and transport of certain radiological materials to minimise the risk that such material can be misused by terrorists.

The recommendations agreed to by COAG are described below.

Nuclear material

Recommendation 1: Adopt CPPNM

Adopt the recent amendments to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) in domestic legislation and ratify the amendment. This will strengthen Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office's (ASNO) authority to ensure nuclear facilities are secured.

Recommendation 2: Scalability in security plans

Scalability in security plans should be introduced for permit-holders and the plans tested through exercises. This should be extended beyond Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) to uranium mines and small quantity permit-holders and, where it is, it should be done in consultation with other relevant jurisdictions as necessary. ASNO may accept invitations to participate in existing, relevant exercises or choose to conduct their own.

Recommendation 3: Increased inspections of permit-holders and uranium mines

Using a risk-based approach, increase the frequency and intensity of ASNO inspections of permit-holders and uranium mines in particular to meet the expanding commitment in this area.

Recommendation 4: Security at proposed radioactive waste store

In-principle agreement to providing nuclear safeguards and security measures consistent with both IAEA standards and domestic legislation at the proposed Commonwealth radioactive waste management facility.

Recommendation 5: Coordinated approach to outreach

ASNO to continue its outreach and inspection work to ensure the national nuclear material accounts are complete. Where appropriate, this work should be coordinated with Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) and state authority efforts in relation to controlling radioactive materials.

Recommendation 6: Memoranda of Understanding

Memoranda of understanding should be developed between state and territory regulators, ARPANSA and ASNO regarding security regulation at nuclear facilities. This initiative will assist in avoiding duplication across jurisdictions at the same facility.

Radioactive sources

Recommendation 1: Legal authority

Each jurisdiction should take the necessary steps to ensure that its radiation safety legislation gives the required legal basis to adequately regulate the security of radioactive sources, including making of standards, licence conditions, compliance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

Recommendation 2: Education and awareness outreach

An education and awareness-raising program targeting users of categories 1, 2 and 3 radioactive sources should be conducted by ARPANSA in conjunction with relevant state and territory radiation regulators and ASNO where appropriate. The outreach program should focus on the security of radioactive sources, including the recommendations of this report as well as the Code of Practice for the Security of Radioactive sources.

Recommendation 3: Monitoring equipment to prevent illegal movement of radioactive sources

The Commonwealth, through ARPANSA and the Australian Customs Service, in conjunction with the states and territories, should review the effectiveness of the existing radiation monitoring in Australia to detect the illegal or inadvertent movement of radioactive sources with regard to external borders and related infrastructure in which radioactive sources may be transported through or stored in during their import or export from Australia. The review should bring forward recommendations for any enhanced monitoring required.

Recommendation 4: Radioactive sources import and export controls

Procedures for authorising the import or export of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources should be harmonised with the IAEA's *Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources*.

Recommendation 5: Establishment of minimum penalties for illegal possession of radioactive sources

All jurisdictions should standardise offences and implement consistent minimum penalties for illegal possession, use and transport of radioactive material. This should be managed through the Radiation Health Committee in consultation with the relevant departments in each jurisdiction.

Recommendation 6: Uniform national standards for security of radioactive material

All jurisdictions should implement the Code of Practice on the Security of Radioactive Sources, once agreed by all jurisdictions, on an expedited basis.

The Commonwealth, through ARPANSA, in consultation with the states and territories, should prepare or amend such other codes of practice as necessary to establish a regulatory framework to regulate the security of radioactive sources during all stages of the life cycle including manufacture, transportation, use, storage and disposal. Such codes of practice should form part of the National Directory for Radiation Protection.

Recommendation 7: Management of disused radioactive sources

All jurisdictions should ensure that adequate inventories of disused radioactive sources exist, that safe and secure waste stores are available to their jurisdiction for such sources, and comprehensive waste management plans are prepared and implemented to ensure the number of radioactive sources available for malicious use is minimised.

Recommendation 8: Securing orphaned radioactive sources

The Commonwealth, through ARPANSA, should establish and maintain a capability for searching for missing Category 1, 2 and 3 radioactive sources and, in consultation with relevant jurisdictions, securing such sources when found.

Recommendation 9: Audit of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources

Each jurisdiction should undertake an audit of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources (as identified in the draft Code of Practice on the Security of Radioactive Sources) to verify that sources within these categories are under regulatory control.

Recommendation 10: National radioactive source incident notification system

The Commonwealth, in consultation with states and territories, should establish a centralised notification system for regulators in jurisdictions to report stolen, lost or orphaned radioactive sources to ARPANSA. This system should be linked with relevant Commonwealth agencies.

Recommendation 11: National radioactive source register

The Commonwealth, through ARPANSA, with the cooperation of the states and territories, should establish, in the near term, an up-to-date secure intranet-based national register of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources, including, as a minimum, the following information about each radioactive source: licence number, licence-holder, manufacturer, model, serial number, isotope, activity level and application. The register is to allow tracking of radioactive sources at intra and inter-jurisdictional levels. In consultation with the Radiation Health Committee, once the register is established, its extension should consider covering Category 3 sources.

Recommendation 12: Transfer of radioactive sources

Jurisdictions should develop a uniform national regulatory approach to authorising the transfer of Category 1 and 2 radioactive sources in the near term and Category 3 radioactive sources in the medium term, in order to avoid the risk of such sources becoming uncontrolled and acquired by persons with malicious intent.