

# GUIDE 161

## RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS (LOW LEVEL RADIATION)

### POTENTIAL HAZARDS

#### HEALTH

- Radiation presents minimal risk to transport workers, emergency response personnel and the public during transportation accidents. Packaging durability increases as potential hazard of radioactive content increases.
- Very low levels of contained radioactive materials and low radiation levels outside packages result in low risks to people. Damaged packages may release measurable amounts of radioactive material, but the resulting risks are expected to be low.
- Some radioactive materials cannot be detected by commonly available instruments.
- Packages do not have RADIOACTIVE I, II, or III labels. Some may have EMPTY labels or may have the word "Radioactive" in the package marking.

#### FIRE OR EXPLOSION

- Some of these materials may burn, but most do not ignite readily.
- Many have cardboard outer packaging; content (physically large or small) can be of many different physical forms.
- Radioactivity does not change flammability or other properties of materials.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

- **CALL 911. Then call emergency response telephone number on shipping paper.** If shipping paper not available or no answer, refer to appropriate telephone number listed on the inside back cover.
- **Priorities for rescue, life-saving, first aid, fire control and other hazards are higher than the priority for measuring radiation levels.**
- Radiation Authority must be notified of accident conditions. Radiation Authority is usually responsible for decisions about radiological consequences and closure of emergencies.
- Stay upwind, uphill and/or upstream.
- Keep unauthorized personnel away.
- Detain or isolate uninjured persons or equipment suspected to be contaminated; delay decontamination and cleanup until instructions are received from Radiation Authority.

#### PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

- Positive pressure self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and structural firefighters' protective clothing will provide adequate protection.

#### EVACUATION

##### Immediate precautionary measure

- Isolate spill or leak area for at least 25 meters (75 feet) in all directions.

##### Large Spill

- Consider initial downwind evacuation for at least 100 meters (330 feet).

##### Fire

- When a large quantity of this material is involved in a major fire, consider an initial evacuation distance of 300 meters (1000 feet) in all directions.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**FIRE**

- Presence of radioactive material will not influence the fire control processes and should not influence selection of techniques.
- If it can be done safely, move undamaged containers away from the area around the fire.
- Do not move damaged packages; move undamaged packages out of fire zone.

**Small Fire**

- Dry chemical, CO<sub>2</sub>, water spray or regular foam.

**Large Fire**

- Water spray, fog (flooding amounts).

**SPILL OR LEAK**

- Do not touch damaged packages or spilled material.
- Cover liquid spill with sand, earth or other non-combustible absorbent material.
- Cover powder spill with plastic sheet or tarp to minimize spreading.

**FIRST AID**

Refer to the “General First Aid” section.

**Specific First Aid:**

- Medical problems take priority over radiological concerns.
- Use first aid treatment according to the nature of the injury.
- Do not delay care and transport of a seriously injured person.
- Injured persons contaminated by contact with released material are not a serious hazard to health care personnel, equipment or facilities.