



News from the Savannah River National Laboratory

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS APPROVED FOR DHS TESTING PROGRAM

AIKEN, S.C. (June 9, 2010) – The Savannah River Site (SRS) has been approved by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as one of the testing facilities associated with a new program designed to test radiation detection equipment. Radiation detectors are vital tools used by law enforcement personnel to interdict terrorists' use of radioactive material. This program helps ensure that equipment meets the appropriate standards for acceptance. The effort, managed by the DHS Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) is called the Graduated Rad/Nuc Detector Evaluation and Reporting (GRaDERSM) Program.

GRaDER is working with U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) laboratories like Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) at SRS to perform independent testing of commercially available radiation detectors. Results of the GRaDER Program testing will be made available to DHS and other federal agencies, as well as state and local law enforcement first responders.

SRNL, which provides a variety of technology, training and consultation for DNDO, has partnered with the SRS Health Physics Instrument Calibration Laboratory (HPICL) for the testing program. Jack Revell is a senior health physicist with responsibilities for implementing the testing protocols used in the GRaDER radiation tests. "HPICL is a state of the art facility with a wide array of irradiators, an experienced health physics staff, and unique automated equipment developed specifically for GRaDER testing" said Revell.

To accomplish the full range of testing requirements under GRaDER, Global Testing Laboratories (GTL) out of Knoxville, Tenn., will also partner with SRNL and HPICL in this effort. "The testing requirements not only cover a wide variety of radiation tests that can be accomplished at HPICL but also require environmental tests to ensure that equipment can hold up under conditions that might be experienced by users," said Al Goodwyn, SRNL program manager for Department of Homeland Security missions. Environmental tests by GTL at their Knoxville facility will test equipment capabilities under vibration, dust, moisture, drop and electro-magnetic interference conditions.

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The GRaDER Program will encourage manufacturers to develop better radiation detection instruments critical for the interdiction of radioactive materials and allow first responder agencies to make informed decisions. “The program will help users choose capable and reliable radiation detection equipment, making them more effective and helping them get the most out of their budget dollars” said Revell.

Testing activities are expected to begin in August 2010.

SRNL is DOE’s applied research and development national laboratory at SRS. SRNL puts science to work to support DOE and the nation in the areas of environmental management, national and homeland security, and energy security. The management and operating contractor for SRS and SRNL is Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC.

SRNS-10-39

Photo attached: SRS Health Physics Instrument Calibration Laboratory equipment that will be used for GRaDER testing: Low Scatter Irradiator. (Additional photos are available.)

