



5 Steps to Radiation Preparedness

There are no shortcuts to preparing for the most dangerous scenarios that impact public health and safety.

Radiation is an often overlooked threat, yet unsecured radioactive sources can lead to catastrophic scenarios for law enforcement and emergency response teams, and can have devastating, long-term implications for a community, city or entire region.

As a decision-maker in your agency, how do you begin to formulate a plan for radiation preparedness, if you haven't already? How do you determine which instrumentation you need, how you will secure funding and who in your department requires training?

Here are 5 steps that every law enforcement agency should consider to ensure radiation preparedness:



Step 1: Recognize the importance of preparation.

Radiological disasters may be infrequent, but they can and do happen. The widespread availability of radiological materials at unsecured facilities increases the potential for terrorists to obtain these materials and use them. They can be accessed at hospitals and blood banks; sites with integrated radioactive sources, such as bottling plants; and through mobile sources in non-invasive gauging equipment. There is also frequently unrealized radioactive waste on and around interstate highways. The latest technological advances now provide law enforcement officers with the ability to monitor large areas for radioactive sources in real time. Additionally, they virtually eliminate nuisance alarms generated by people with recent medical treatments or by natural radiation from building materials.



Step 2: Develop a coordinated, smart program.

To determine how many pieces of instrumentation they will require and who will be operating the instruments, law enforcement agencies need to account for such factors as size of jurisdiction, population, density and proliferation of radioactive sources, and proximity to critical infrastructure such as ports, borders or power plants. A coordinated effort to thwart radiological dispersal devices (RDDs) usually involves a combination of handheld personal radiation detectors (PRDs) for field agents and larger, more sensitive mobile and fixed detector systems strategically placed to ensure that a city of any size is covered.



Step 3: Determine funding sources

Grants are available to reduce the financial burden on local budgets, including grants earmarked specifically for radiation detection and identification instruments. Federal grants are often available through the Department of Homeland Security. PoliceGrantsHelp.com and FireGrantsHelp.com allow units to identify local, state and federal grant programs.



Step 4: Identify instrumentation and a vendor with solutions to match your needs.

An economical and comprehensive radiation monitoring plan will allow you to purchase instrumentation from a single vendor that offers a complete product portfolio. This will allow simplified training programs by leveraging common user interfaces and terminology. Additionally, using a single vendor ensures streamlined services, including common spare parts, depot repair centers and a single point of contact for service support.



Step 5: Train agents and implement your plan.

The most innovative devices available today are designed for use by non-technical experts. PRDs are smaller, faster, easier-to-use and more portable than ever before. Agencies can confidently send officers into the field equipped with pager-sized PRDs with minimal training; the devices do all the work. Agencies can likewise deploy fixed monitors in various locations and environments, with minimally-trained agents able to monitor data remotely.



Many law enforcement agencies are aware that a radiation preparedness plan is necessary, but they don't know where to begin. If you would like to implement a program, Thermo Fisher Scientific experts can help guide you through these five steps to radiation preparedness – and to stopping radiological disasters before they happen.

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