Improper Shipment from Los Alamos National Laboratory

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has been informed by Los Alamos National Laboratory that proper procedures were not followed in shipping small quantities of special nuclear material to both Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the Savannah River National Laboratory last week.

The shipments should have been made using commercial ground cargo services, and were packaged and containerized for this mode of transportation. However, the actual shipment documents were instead prepared for transport via commercial air cargo services, a mode of transportation not authorized by Federal regulations. The shipments were subsequently sent aboard commercial cargo aircraft. Upon receipt of the shipments at their respective destinations, safety tests confirmed that there was no loss of radioactive material or contamination.

“This failure to follow established procedures is absolutely unacceptable,” said NNSA Administrator Lt. Gen. Frank Klotz, USAF (Ret). “I require the contractors who manage and operate our national laboratories and production plants to rigorously adhere to the highest safety and security standards in performing the vitally important work they do for our national security.”

An investigation is being conducted to determine the root cause of this incident, as well as procedures to avoid future incidents of this type. Upon completion of the investigation, NNSA will use the full terms and conditions of the contract to ensure that any responsible parties are held accountable.

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