

Strengthening the Safe and Secure Transport of Radioactive Material in Nepal: Current Status, Issues & Challenges.

The safe and secure transport of radioactive material is increasingly important in Nepal, a landlocked and non-nuclear country where the use of radiation is growing in the medical field, mainly for imaging and cancer treatment. While Nepal does not produce or possess nuclear materials, but it imports both sealed and unsealed radioactive sources for medical applications.

A notable incident in 2014, involving the disappearance of a disused Iridium-192 source en route to Belgium for disposal raised serious concerns about the safety and security of radioactive material transport in Nepal. This paper presents the current status, regulatory framework, institutional responsibilities, and capacity-building efforts related to the transport of radioactive materials in the country.

At present, several agencies are involved in regulating this area, including the Department of Drug Administration (Ministry of Health and Population), the Nuclear Materials Management Division (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Customs Department (Ministry of Finance). Nepal follows IAEA safety guidelines and has gained significant support through international cooperation, notably from the IAEA and the U.S. Office of Radiological Security in developing safety and security standards for transport of Radioactive Materials.

This abstract highlights progress made in strengthening national legislation, licensing procedures, emergency preparedness, and inter-agency coordination. Persistent challenges include limited regulatory infrastructure, shortage of qualified personnel, lack of dedicated transport carriers, insufficient training of customs and border officials. Despite existing constraints, Nepal remains committed to enhancing its regulatory framework through legal and robust regulatory infrastructure, regional cooperation, and capacity-building efforts. These initiatives are especially relevant for landlocked developing countries striving to align with international best practices in the safe and secure transport of radioactive materials.

Country or International Organization

Instructions

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