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Standard Guide for In-Plant Performance Evaluation of Automatic Pedestrian SNM Monitors¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide is affiliated with Guide C 1112 on applying special nuclear material (SNM) monitors, Guide C 1169 on laboratory performance evaluation, Guide C 1189 on calibrating pedestrian SNM monitors, and Guides C 1236 and C 1237 on in-plant evaluation. This guide to in-plant performance evaluation is a comparatively rapid way to verify whether a pedestrian SNM monitor performs as expected for detecting SNM or SNM-like test sources.

1.1.1 In-plant performance evaluation should not be confused with the simple daily functional test recommended in Guide C 1112. In-plant performance evaluation takes place less often than daily tests, usually at intervals ranging from weekly to once every three months. In-plant evaluations are also more extensive than daily tests and may examine both a monitor's nuisance alarm record and its detection sensitivity for a particular SNM or alternative test source.

1.1.2 In-plant performance evaluation also should not be confused with laboratory performance evaluation. In-plant evaluation is comparatively rapid, takes place in the monitor's routine operating environment, and its results are limited to verifying that a monitor is operating as expected, or to disclosing that it is not and needs repair or recalibration.

1.2 In-plant evaluation is one part of a program to keep SNM monitors in proper operating condition. Every monitor in a facility is evaluated. There are two applications of the in-plant evaluation: one used during routine operation and another used after calibration.

1.2.1 *Routine Operational Evaluation*—In this form of the evaluation, nuisance alarm records for each monitor are examined, and each monitor's detection sensitivity is estimated during routine operation. The routine operational evaluation is intended to reassure the plant operator, and his regulatory agency, that the monitor is performing as expected during routine operation. This evaluation takes place without pre-testing, recalibration, or other activity that might change the monitor's operation, and the evaluation simulates the normal use of the monitor.

1.2.2 *Post-Calibration Evaluation*—This form of the evaluation is part of a maintenance procedure; it should always follow scheduled monitor recalibration, or recalibration connected with repair or relocation of the monitor, to verify that an expected detection sensitivity is achieved. Nuisance alarm data do not apply in this case because the monitor has just been recalibrated. Also, having just been calibrated, the monitor is likely to be operating at its best, which may be somewhat better than its routine operation.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 The guide is based on ASTM standards that describe application and evaluation of SNM monitors, as well as technical publications that describe aspects of SNM monitor design and use.

2.2 *ASTM Standards:* a2a89573bada/astm-c993-97

C 859 Terminology Relating to Nuclear Materials²

C 1112 Guide for Application of Radiation Monitors to the Control and Physical Security of Special Nuclear Material²

C 1169 Guide for Laboratory Evaluation of Automatic Pedestrian SNM Monitor Performance²

C 1189 Guide to Procedures for Calibrating Automatic Pedestrian SNM Monitors²

C 1236 Guide for In-Plant Performance Evaluation of Automatic Vehicle SNM Monitors²

C 1237 Guide to In-Plant Performance Evaluation of Hand-Held SNM Monitors²

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *alternative test source*—although no other radioactive materials individually or collectively duplicate the radioactive emissions of uranium or plutonium, some materials have

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 12.01.

somewhat similar attributes and are sometimes used as alternative test sources.

3.1.2 *alternative gamma-ray test sources*—examples of alternative gamma-ray sources are HEU or ¹³³Ba used in place of plutonium when a plutonium source is not readily available or is prohibited.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—Table 1 tabulates amounts of HEU mass, plutonium mass, and ¹³³Ba source activity that produce equal response in two different types of monitor.

3.1.3 *alternative neutron test source*—a common alternative neutron source used in place of plutonium is ²⁵²Cf that emits neutrons from spontaneous fission as does plutonium.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—Alternative test sources may have short decay half-lives in comparison to SNM isotopes; for example, the half-life of ¹³³Ba is 10.7 years and ²⁵²Cf 2.64 years. Larger source activities than initially needed are often purchased to obtain a longer working lifetime for the source.

3.1.4 *confidence coefficient*—the theoretical proportion of confidence intervals from an infinite number of repetitions of an evaluation that would contain the true result.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—In a demonstration, if the true result were known the theoretical confidence coefficient would be the approximate proportion of confidence intervals, from a large number of repetitions of an evaluation, that contain the true result. Typical confidence coefficients are 0.90, 0.95 and 0.99.

3.1.5 *Confidence Interval for a Detection Probability*—An interval, based on an actual evaluation situation, so constructed that it contains the (true) detection probability with a stated confidence.

3.1.5.1 *Discussion*—Confidence is often expressed as 100* the confidence coefficient. Thus, typical confidence levels are 90, 95 and 99 %.

3.1.6 *detection probability*—the proportion of passages for which the monitor is expected to alarm during passages of a particular test source.

3.1.6.1 *Discussion*—Although probabilities are properly expressed as proportions, performance requirements for detection probability in regulatory guidance have sometimes been expressed in percentage. In that case, the detection probability as a proportion can be obtained by dividing the percentage by 100.

3.1.7 *nuisance alarm*—a monitoring alarm not caused by SNM but by other causes, such as statistical variation in the measurement process, a background intensity variation, or an equipment malfunction.

3.1.8 *process-SNM test source*—an SNM test source fabricated by a facility from process material that differs in physical or isotopic form from the material recommended in 3.1.11 for standard test sources.

3.1.8.1 *Discussion*—This type of source is used when it meets plant operator or regulatory agency performance requirements and a suitable standard source is not readily available. Encapsulation and filtering should follow that recommended in 3.1.11.

3.1.9 *SNM*—special nuclear material: plutonium of any isotopic composition, ²³³U, or enriched uranium as defined in Terminology C 859.

3.1.9.1 *Discussion*—This term is used here to describe both SNM and strategic SNM, which includes plutonium, ²³³U, and uranium enriched to 20 % or more in the ²³⁵U isotope.

3.1.10 *SNM monitor*—radiation detection system that measures ambient radiation intensity, determines an alarm threshold from the result, and then, when it monitors, sounds an alarm if its measured radiation intensity exceeds the threshold.

3.1.11 *standard SNM test source*—a metallic sphere or cube of SNM having maximum self attenuation of its emitted radiation and an isotopic composition listed below that minimizes the intensity of its radiation emission. Encapsulation and filtering also affect radiation intensity, and particular details are listed for each source. This type of test source is used in laboratory evaluation but, if suitable and readily available, may be used for in-plant evaluation.

3.1.12 *standard plutonium test source*—a metallic sphere or cube of low-burnup plutonium containing at least 93 % ²³⁹Pu, less than 6.5 % ²⁴⁰Pu, and less than 0.5 % impurities.

3.1.12.1 *Discussion*—A cadmium filter can reduce the impact of ²⁴¹Am, a plutonium decay product that will slowly build up in time and emit increasing amounts of 60-keV radiation. Begin use of a 0.04-cm thick cadmium filter when three or more years have elapsed since separation of plutonium decay products. If ten or more years have elapsed since separation, use a cadmium filter 0.08 cm thick. The protective encapsulation should be in as many layers as local rules require. A nonradioactive encapsulation material, such as, aluminum (≤0.32 cm-thick) or thin (≤0.16 cm-thick) stainless steel or nickel, should be used to reduce unnecessary radiation absorption.

3.1.13 *standard uranium test source*—a metallic sphere or cube of highly enriched uranium (HEU) containing at least 93 % ²³⁵U and less than 0.25 % impurities. Protective encapsulation should be thin plastic or thin aluminum (≤0.32 cm thick) to reduce unnecessary radiation absorption in the encapsulation. No additional filter is needed.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *post-calibration evaluation*—verifies performance after repair, relocation, or recalibration. Monitor is prepared for best operation. Monitor is not yet in routine operation. Only sensitivity is evaluated.

3.2.2 *routine-operational evaluation*—verifies performance in routine operation. Simulates normal use of a monitor. Uses no monitor preparation procedures. Both sensitivity and nuisance alarm probability or rate are evaluated.

TABLE 1 Alternative Test Source Equivalent Amounts^A

Monitor Category	Monitor Description	Plutonium, Uranium,		¹³³ Ba (μCi) Required in	
		g	g	Nal(T1) Scintillator Monitors	Plastic Scintillator Monitors
I	Standard plutonium	1	64	2.5	3.2
II	Standard uranium	0.29	10	0.9	1.4
III	Improved sensitivity	0.08	3	0.4	0.6
IV	High sensitivity	0.03	1	0.2	0.3

^AThis table combines information from Tables II and V of the report referenced in Footnote 8. Note that the term "category" refers to an SNM monitor performance category used in that report and not to an SNM accountability category. Also note that the ¹³³Ba source strengths depend on individual differences in how the scintillators respond to radiation from the barium isotope and plutonium.



4. Summary of Guide

4.1 Preliminary Steps Common to Both Forms of In-Plant Evaluation:

4.1.1 The monitor being evaluated is an automatic walkthrough-portal or monitoring booth.

4.1.2 The monitor's indicated background measurement value is recorded for possible future use in troubleshooting.

4.1.3 *Nonmandatory Information*—If a gamma-ray survey meter (see 6.1) capable of quickly and precisely measuring environmental gamma-ray intensity is available, its use and recording its measurement value may provide additional beneficial information for future troubleshooting.³ Independent knowledge of the ambient background intensity also can help to interpret performance differences at different monitor locations or at one location at different times.

4.2 Steps for Routine Operational Evaluation:

4.2.1 Determine nuisance alarm probability during the period since the monitor was last maintained, calibrated, or evaluated (see 8.1). Use recorded numbers of alarms and pedestrian passages from records kept during routine monitor use.

4.2.1.1 Handwritten alarm logs or records from the monitor's control unit can provide total alarms (see Section 6) from which alarms from daily or other performance testing and alarms explained by radioactive material presence in follow-up searches must be subtracted.

4.2.1.2 Total pedestrian passages can be estimated from operating logs or recorded information from the monitor's control unit.

4.2.2 Estimate detection probability by transporting a standard SNM, process-SNM, or alternative test source (see Section 7) through the monitor in a specific way adopted for evaluation beforehand (see 8.2).

4.2.2.1 Record the results, detect or miss for each passage.

4.2.2.2 End testing when a total number of passages, selected beforehand, is reached.

4.2.2.3 Analyze the results as a binomial experiment (see 8.2).

4.3 Steps for Post-Calibration Evaluation:

4.3.1 Calibrate the monitor according to procedures suggested by the manufacturer, Guide C 1189, or local practice.

4.3.2 Estimate detection probability by transporting a standard SNM, process-SNM, or alternative test source (see Section 7) through the monitor in a specific way adopted beforehand (see 8.2).

4.3.2.1 Record the results, detect or miss for each passage.

4.3.2.2 End testing when a total number of passages, selected beforehand, is reached.

4.3.2.3 Analyze the results as a binomial experiment (see 8.2).

5. Significance and Use

5.1 SNM monitors are an effective and unobtrusive means to search pedestrians for concealed SNM. Facility security

plans use SNM monitors as one means to prevent theft or unauthorized removal of designated quantities of SNM from access areas. Daily testing of the monitors with radioactive sources guarantees only the continuity of alarm circuits. The in-plant evaluation is a way to estimate whether an acceptable level of performance for detecting chosen quantities of SNM is obtained from a monitor in routine service or after repair or calibration.

5.2 The evaluation verifies acceptable performance or discloses faults in hardware or calibration.

5.3 The evaluation uses test sources shielded only by normal source filters and encapsulation and, perhaps, by intervening portions of the transporting individual's body. The transporting individual also provides another form of shielding when the body intercepts environmental radiation that would otherwise reach the monitor's detectors. Hence, transporting individuals play an important role in the evaluation by reproducing an important condition of routine operation.

5.4 The evaluation, when applied as a routine-operational evaluation, provides evidence for continued compliance with the performance goals of security plans or regulatory guidance. It is the responsibility of the users of this evaluation to coordinate its application with the appropriate regulatory authority so that mutually agreeable evaluation frequency, test sources, way of transporting the test source, number of test-source passages, and nuisance-alarm-rate goals are used. Agreed written procedures should be used to document the coordination.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Gamma Ray Survey Meter (Nonmandatory Information)*—Historical records of gamma-ray background intensity may provide useful information for troubleshooting future monitoring problems. An evaluation offers a good opportunity to record both the monitor's indicated background count and the gamma-ray background intensity. If desired, gamma-ray intensity can be measured with a survey meter and recorded during the evaluation. The gamma-ray survey meter should have a NaI(Tl) or plastic scintillator capable of measuring environmental gamma radiation in the range from 60 keV to 3 MeV at background intensities that normally range between 5 and 25 $\mu\text{R/h}$ (1.3 and 6.5 nC/kg or 0.36 and 1.8 pA/kg).

6.2 *Recording Devices*—Written operator logs can provide records of alarms and passages needed for determining nuisance alarm rates. In some cases, monitor controllers can automatically accumulate these records and communicate them to operators or maintenance personnel by data terminal, printer, or other means. If so, operator logs are still essential for providing information on alarms that result from testing or detected passage of radioactive material.

6.3 *Written Records*—When written operator logs provide the only information on total alarms and passages, passages should be determined from an average number of passages per day or week and the elapsed time rather than logging passages on an individual basis.

7. Test Materials

7.1 The materials needed for detection sensitivity evaluation

³ Fehlau, P. E., Sampson, T. E., Henry, C. N., Bieri, J. M., and Chambers, W. H., "On-Site Inspection Procedures for SNM Doorway Monitors," U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Contractor Report NUREG/CR-0598 and Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory Report LA-7646, 1979.



are agreed upon (see 5.4) types and amounts of material. These may be standard SNM (see 3.1.11), process SNM (see 3.1.8), or alternative (see 3.1.1) test sources. Standard 10 and 3-g ^{235}U spherical test sources used in laboratory evaluations are available to Department of Energy (DOE) contractors from Los Alamos.⁴

7.2 A monitor's detection sensitivity for certain types of SNM can be estimated using alternative test sources.

7.2.1 *Alternatives for ^{233}U and ^{238}Pu* —A detection sensitivity estimated with standard HEU or low-burnup plutonium test sources demonstrates that a monitor has adequate gamma-ray sensitivity for detecting equal amounts of the more radioactive forms of SNM, ^{233}U , and ^{238}Pu .

7.2.2 *Alternatives for Low-Burnup Plutonium*—Detecting a standard HEU or substitute ^{133}Ba test source demonstrates that a monitor has adequate gamma-ray sensitivity for detecting low-burnup plutonium in the amounts listed in Table 1. The amounts were derived from source measurements in automatic pedestrian SNM monitors. When using ^{133}Ba , which has a 10.7-year half-life, purchasing approximately twice the activity listed in Table 1 will give the test source a useful lifetime of about 10 years. The reasoning is that a source with twice the activity is equivalent to the listed amount of low-burnup plutonium with 3-years accumulation of radioactive daughters. At the end of its 10-year useful lifetime, the source activity is reduced to the listed amount of plutonium freshly separated from its daughters. Hence, the equivalence is maintained over the period that standard plutonium sources may be used without filtering (see 3.1.9.1).

7.2.3 *Alternative Sources for SNM Neutron Emission*—A detection sensitivity estimated for neutron monitors using ^{252}Cf , a spontaneous-fission neutron source, can demonstrate adequate neutron sensitivity for detecting low-burnup plutonium in an amount corresponding to 1 g of ^{240}Pu for each 1000 neutrons per second from ^{252}Cf . For example, a 6000 neutron/s ^{252}Cf test source is equivalent to 6 g of ^{240}Pu . This, in turn, is equivalent to a 100-g quantity of plutonium containing 6 % ^{240}Pu .

7.3 The information on test source size in Table 1 applies to monitoring situations that require detecting small quantities of SNM that appear in the table. In other monitoring situations, test source amounts should be determined on an individual basis, and the table should not be used.

7.4 The performance of any SNM monitor will depend on its environmental background, hence one test source may not serve to evaluate all monitors in all circumstances. Different locations may require different test sources.

8. Procedures

8.1 *Procedure for Nuisance Alarm Evaluation (Not Used for Post-Calibration Evaluation):*

8.1.1 Nuisance alarms can stem from counting statistics, background intensity variations, and equipment malfunction.

8.1.2 *Recording Data*—Nuisance alarms must be recorded along with the total number of passages through the monitor.

Recording can be a continuous process when a monitor is attended and a written record of alarms and passages is kept in a log book, or when the monitor control unit automatically records alarms and passages. When automatic recording of passages is not possible, carefully estimating the number of passages per day may suffice.

8.1.3 *Analyzing Data*—During a routine-operational evaluation, the nuisance alarm probability or rate is calculated from the recorded total number of alarms and passages since the last evaluation. Alarms from daily tests or known passage of radioactive material are subtracted from the alarm total. The nuisance alarm probability per passage is the total number of alarms divided by the total number of passages. Monitors often have nuisance alarm probabilities in the range from 0.00025 to 0.001 per passage when properly operating and without interference from facility operation. The nuisance alarm rate is the number of passages divided by the number of alarms. The corresponding rate range to the probabilities mentioned above is 1 alarm per 4000 passages to 1 alarm per 1000 passages.

8.1.4 *Correcting Problems*—Consistent nuisance alarm rates high enough to cause a lack of credibility for a monitor's alarms must be investigated and corrected.

8.1.4.1 Begin investigating by checking the monitor's calibration. Refer to the manufacturer's recommended procedure, Guide C 1189, or local procedures.

8.1.4.2 If the problem persists, then recording the monitor's count rate on a strip chart or data logger may disclose interference from sources of radiation or, perhaps, intermittent misoperation of the portal. Radiation interference may be reduced by shielding its source. Causes of intermittent misoperation can usually be found and repaired once they are known to exist.

8.2 *Procedure for Detection Probability Evaluation:*

8.2.1 At the start of the evaluation, a test source must have been chosen that is agreeable (see 5.4) to the plant operator and his regulatory agency. Section 7 describes some different types of sources, but there are undoubtedly others that could be used.

8.2.2 A uniform, convenient, and agreeable (see 5.4) way for an individual to carry the source through the monitor also must have been chosen. The specified way should take into account the region of the portal that the source will pass through and the passage speed of the source, two factors that affect SNM monitor sensitivity. For example, a source passing through the waist region of a portal monitor may be more readily detected than one passing through the head or foot regions. In either case, a source is usually more readily detected when carried by an individual walking slowly than one walking rapidly. The specified way to carry the source must give final results after 5 to 30 passages. The chosen way should be refined during preliminary evaluation and initial experience with in-plant evaluation and then used consistently thereafter. Some examples of ways that have been used to carry a source are walking with the source held in a hand near the belt buckle or behind the back, to walk with the source in a pocket or attached to a shoe or boot, and to walk with the source attached to other parts of the body.

8.2.3 The source may have to be attached to an individual to

⁴ Group NIS-6, MS-J562, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, NM 87545.