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

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide is one of a series on special nuclear material (SNM) monitors and their performance evaluation. Others in the series provide information on SNM monitoring, monitor calibration, and methods of evaluation (see 1.3), but Guide C993, in particular, provides much of the basis for this guide. The purpose for a guide to in-plant performance evaluation is to provide a comparatively rapid way to *verify* whether SNM monitors perform as expected for detecting SNM or an alternative test source.

1.2 Guide C993 points out that in-plant evaluation is one part of a program to keep SNM monitors in proper operating condition and that in-plant evaluation can be used as a routine operational evaluation or can be used to verify performance after a monitor is calibrated.

1.3 This guide is based on ASTM standards that describe applying and evaluating SNM monitors.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

- C993 Guide for In-Plant Performance Evaluation of Automatic Pedestrian SNM Monitors
- C1112 Guide for Application of Radiation Monitors to the Control and Physical Security of Special Nuclear Material
- C1189 Guide to Procedures for Calibrating Automatic Pedestrian SNM Monitors

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*:

3.1.1 *vehicle monitoring station*—a type of vehicle SNM monitor that monitors vehicles while they are stopped, awaiting clearance at an entry/exit station.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—These monitors are described in 5.3.2 of Guide C1112.

3.1.2 *vehicle portal monitor*—an automatic vehicle SNM monitor that monitors moving vehicles as they pass through radiation detectors during their approach to an entry/exit station.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—These monitors are described in 5.3.1 of Guide C1112.

3.2 Terminology for confidence coefficient, confidence interval, detection probability, evaluations, nuisance alarm, SNM, SNM monitor, and test sources is defined or described in Section 3 of Guide C993.

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 The monitor to be evaluated is a vehicle SNM portal monitor (see 3.1.1) or a vehicle SNM monitoring station (see 3.1.2).

4.2 As a first step, the monitor's indicated background measurement value is recorded for possible future use in troubleshooting.

4.3 If the monitor is being evaluated in routine operation, the number of nuisance alarms since the last evaluation is examined for evidence of possible misoperation.

4.4 The detection probability for a test source is evaluated by repeatedly transporting a test source through the monitor.

4.5 The results of the evaluation are analyzed and recorded.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 SNM monitors are an effective and unobtrusive means to search for concealed SNM, and facility security plans use them to prevent SNM theft or unauthorized removal from SNM access areas. Functional testing of monitors on a daily basis with radioactive sources can assure that they are in good working order. The significant use of a less frequent, in-plant evaluation of an SNM monitor is to verify that the monitor achieves an expected probability of detection for an SNM or alternative test source.

NOTE 1—An SNM test source used for in-plant evaluation is normally shielded only by protective encapsulation and the parts of a vehicle that may lie between the source and the monitor's detectors. However, the

evaluation procedure could just as well be used to verify an expected level of detection for SNM inside of containers or shields.

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 h or 0.36 and 1.8 pA/kg).

7. Test Materials

7.1 The required material is a test source that may be standard SNM, process SNM, or an alternative test source as described in Section 7 of Guide C993.

8. Procedure

8.1 Procedure for Nuisance Alarm Evaluation:

8.1.1 Examine records of nuisance alarms when evaluating a monitor in routine service.

8.1.2 The record of alarms should be one generated at the monitoring point.

8.1.3 Depending on how the monitoring-point records are kept, the alarm record may or may not include an estimate of the number of vehicle passages. Hence, either the number of nuisance alarms since the last evaluation or, preferably, information for estimating the nuisance alarm rate per passage may be available.

8.1.4 Compare the number of nuisance alarms or the estimated nuisance alarm rate (nuisance alarms divided by passages) with the expected number derived from previous experience. A high number of nuisance alarms or a high-nuisance alarm rate may indicate a change in monitor performance or an unacceptable SNM monitoring environment. In any case, the problem must be investigated and corrected.

8.1.5 Refer to the manufacturer’s recommended procedures for suggestions on investigating and correcting excessive nuisance alarms. Guide C993 and Guide C1189 also provide information that may be helpful in resolving monitoring problems.

8.2 Procedure for Detection Probability Evaluation:

8.2.1 At the start, a test source (see 7.1), vehicle, location for the source in the vehicle, vehicle passage speed and path through the monitor, and number of vehicle passages must be chosen (if they have not already been chosen).

NOTE 2—It is the responsibility of the users of this evaluation to coordinate its application with the appropriate regulatory authority so that mutually agreeable choices for the items listed and the evaluation frequency are used.

8.2.2 The vehicle used in the performance evaluation must be selected on some basis that assures that the vehicle by itself

does not cause alarms. A possible choice for assurance during an evaluation is the following:

8.2.2.1 The individual who will drive the vehicle during the evaluation can first drive it into or through the monitor, as appropriate, without a source. The chosen manner of passage and the chosen number of passages should be used, and the results (alarm or not for each passage) should be recorded. Any alarms that occur disqualify the vehicle from further use; select another vehicle and restart the evaluation.

8.2.3 Next, the individual should drive the vehicle transporting the source into or through the monitor, as appropriate. After each passage, record the results (detection or miss), and move the vehicle well away from the monitor before making the next passage. Allow the monitor’s background measurement to update after each passage, or after each 20 % of passages when 10 or more passages are used.

8.2.4 When the total number of passages with the source is complete, tally the results and analyze them by using Table 1. Record the analysis result, acceptance, or rejection.

8.2.5 The acceptance criteria in Table 1 provides at least 95 % confidence that the probability of detection for the test source used in the evaluation is greater than 0.50. Therefore, the hypothesis that the monitor is operating as expected is accepted. Rejection criteria does not provide 95 % confidence that the probability of detection is greater than 0.50, so the hypothesis is rejected. In that case, the monitor can be repaired, recalibrated, and evaluated again. See 8.2.5 through 8.2.7 of Guide C993 for a discussion of the criteria.

8.2.6 Other criteria (for more passages, different detection probabilities, or accumulated results) could be used as well. Appendix X2 provides additional criteria for verifying a test source detection probability with 95 % confidence in an evaluation. The criteria can also be used for making a point estimate of detection probability from results accumulated from more than one evaluation.

9. Report

9.1 Written reports should be used to document the evaluation.

9.2 A report for a vehicle monitor evaluation may include the following: monitor switch settings or parameter values, measured background intensity (if available) and the monitor’s displayed count rate, nuisance alarm data and results, detection probability data, and results. See Appendix X1 for an example of an evaluation report form.

TABLE 1 Number of Detections for Acceptance and Rejection

NOTE 1—Complete the number of passages chosen in 8.2.1 and then use the criteria for that number of passages to determine acceptance or rejection of the monitor’s performance.

Total Number of Passages	Number of Detections for Acceptance	Number of Detections for Rejection
5	5	4 or less
10	9 or more	8 or less
15	12 or more	11 or less
20	15 or more	14 or less
30	20 or more	19 or less