



GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING PACKAGES CONTAINING NUCLEAR SUBSTANCES

Identifying Packages Containing Nuclear Substances

The packaging and labeling of nuclear substances is governed by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's *Packaging and Transport of Nuclear Substances (PTNS) Regulations*. Nuclear substances may be shipped in “Excepted Packages”, “Type A” or “Type B” packages, “Industrial Packages I, II, III”, and packages for “Fissile Material”. The “radioactive” category labels also show radiation dose rates.

On Excepted Packages, no external labeling is required, and the safety mark “RADIOACTIVE” must be visible upon opening the package. The radiation level at any point on the external surface of the package must not exceed 5 µSv/h. All other packages must be categorized by radiation level and display the corresponding radiation warning labels as follows:



Category I-WHITE
Does not exceed 5 µSv/h at any location on the external surface of the package



Category II-YELLOW
Does not exceed 500 µSv/h at any location on the external surface of the package and the transport index does not exceed 1.



Category III-YELLOW
Does not exceed 2 mSv/h at any location on the external surface of the package and the transport index does not exceed 10.

The transport index is the maximum radiation level in microsieverts per hour at one metre from the external surface of the package, divided by 10.

Example: 1 µSv/h (0.1 mrem/h) at 1 m equals a TI = 0.1.

Upon receipt of a package containing nuclear substances, keep your distance. Examine the package for damage or leakage. If the package is damaged or leaking, contain and isolate it to minimize radiation exposure and contamination, and comply with Section 19 of the PTNS Regulations.

Opening Packages Containing Nuclear Substances

Radiation Safety Officer

Phone Number

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1. If an appropriate survey monitor is available, monitor the radiation fields around the package. Note any discrepancies.
2. Avoid unnecessary direct contact with unshielded containers.
3. Verify the nuclear substance, the quantity, and other details with the information on the packing slip and with the purchase order. Log the shipment details and any anomalies in the inventory record.
4. Report any anomalies (radiation levels in excess of the package labeling, incorrect transport index, contamination, leakage, short or wrong shipment) to the Radiation Safety Officer.

When opening packages containing unsealed nuclear substances, additional steps should be taken:

5. Wear protective clothing while handling the package.
6. If the material is volatile (unbound iodine, tritium, radioactive gases, etc.) or in a powder form, open the package in a fume hood.
7. Open the outer package and check for possible damage to the contents, broken seals, or discoloration of packing materials. If the contents appear to be damaged, isolate the package to prevent further contamination and notify the Radiation Safety Officer.
8. If no damage is evident, wipe test the inner package or primary container which holds the unsealed nuclear substance. If contamination is detected, monitor all packaging and, if appropriate, all locations in contact with the package, for contamination. Contain the contamination, decontaminate, and dispose in accordance with the conditions of the Nuclear Substances and Radiation Devices licence.

For more information, contact: Directorate of Nuclear Substance Regulation, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, P.O. Box 1046, Station B, Ottawa, ON K1P 5S9. Telephone: 1-888-229-2672. Fax: (613) 995-5086.