

HERCA position paper

HERCA Working group on Research and Industrial Sources and Practices

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High Activity Sealed Sources and the potential use of Alternative Technologies

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A Position Paper from the Heads of the European Radiological Protection Competent Authorities

The Heads of the European Radiological Protection Competent Authorities (HERCA) acknowledge the risk posed by high-activity sealed sources. HERCA recommends reducing the risk associated with high-activity sealed sources by encouraging users to use alternative technologies.

Efforts and measures made by the different competent authorities should be carried out in line with each country's regulatory instruments, national policies and priorities. Although the radiation competent authorities may have different approaches to reduce risk, if they want to promote substitution of high-activity sealed sources with alternative technologies, HERCA agree that the following approaches may serve as a guide to the work;

- Competent authorities may carry out national studies to consider the balance of costs, risks and benefits presented by the use of high-activity sources and the use of alternatives in order to inform the establishment of national policies. Such national policies should be produced in accordance with the standard procedures in each country. Emphasis should be placed on reducing the risk as assessed in each country including the measures in place (or which can be put in place) to control safety and security. The relevant documents of the International Atomic Energy Agency may be used in a graded approach to assessing risk from high-activity sealed sources (ref. IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 11-G).
- Information and guidance may be provided to assist users to consider switching from high-activity sealed sources to alternative technologies when such substitution meets the national policy.
- Phase out high-activity sealed sources according to national policies and priorities over a period of time, while requiring necessary safety and security measures to be taken in the meanwhile.
- Replacement; when a national policy is for substitution of high-activity sealed sources, this may be achieved by use of appropriate mechanism including regulations, justification or by other means.
- High-activity sealed sources taken out of use to reduce risks in one country should be handled as disused sources in accordance with the national policy in each country. The relevant documents of the International Atomic Energy Agency could serve as a guide in the disposal process.