

AbstractID: 10100 Title: Public Health Response to Radiation Emergencies and Potential Roles of Volunteer Radiation Professionals

In case of a terrorist attack involving a radiological dispersal device or an improvised nuclear device, response agencies at all levels of government will face many challenging issues requiring radiation protection expertise. For example, local public health and emergency management agencies will need to monitor potentially impacted and concerned citizens for radioactive contamination, provide them with information and needed assistance, and support operations at evacuation centers or shelters to accommodate the displaced population. Communities hundreds of miles away are likely to be impacted as they host a displaced population. The need for radiation protection expertise in preparing for and effectively responding to a nuclear or radiological emergency is paramount, but local response agencies may not have this needed expertise available to them locally. In the United States, there are tens of thousands of radiation professionals including health physicists, medical physicists, radiological or nuclear medicine technologists, and others who can assist local agencies. These radiation professionals can provide a much-needed resource to their community by volunteering for already established health volunteer organizations in their own communities. The enlisting and appropriate training of such volunteers must be done before an emergency occurs not after. In this presentation, current efforts at federal, state, and local levels to outreach, enlist, and train volunteer radiation professionals will be described. The potential roles of these volunteers in assisting with population monitoring activities will also be described. For individual volunteer radiation professionals, the time commitment is minimal. Potential rewards are significant.

Educational Objectives:

1. Understand the need for radiation protection expertise in effectively responding to a radiation emergency at the local response level.
2. Understand how medical physicists can assist their local public health and emergency management agencies.
3. Learn what current efforts are underway and what local volunteer organizations exist today that can enlist and train medical physicists for response to a radiation emergency.