

The International Atomic Energy Agency's Response to Denials of Shipments of Radioactive Material - ABSTRACT

Radioactive material needs to be transported for use in public health and industry and for production of nuclear power. Transport of radioactive material is governed by national and international regulations which are based on the IAEA Regulations for the safe transport of radioactive material. The regulations are developed by experts from the Member States of IAEA and ensure high standards of safety. However, recently there were increasing numbers of instances of denial and delay of shipment of radioactive material even when complying with regulations.

In particular, delays in and denials of shipments of radioactive material for medical use can result in hardships to patients undergoing diagnosis and treatment with radioactive material and to others, who rely on products sterilized by radiation. There is an urgent need for a universally accepted approach to solving this problem.

To increase transparency, seek effective solutions and permit participation of interested parties, the Agency has appointed an International Steering Committee on Denials of Shipments of Radioactive Material. This Committee will coordinate international efforts at determining solution of issues related to the denial of shipments. The Committee will serve as a mechanism to facilitate the coordination of a comprehensive international work plan of activities conducted by the organisations of the Committee membership related to delays and denials of shipments of radioactive material.

This Committee is composed of senior knowledgeable persons with substantial experience in the field of transport of radioactive material, who are authorized to represent fully the views of the relevant authorities.

During its first year of existence the Committee will oversee Regional workshops, training courses, publication of information brochures and other mechanism for public awareness of the issue. The Committee will also work with regulatory authorities and industry to minimize the number of denials caused by excessive or duplicative regulations and other burdensome requirements. The paper will describe the actions of the Steering Committee and the Agency since the Steering Committee was formed and first met in November 2006.