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An Overview of NCRP Report No. 138 on Terrorist Activities

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In late 1998, the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) convened Scientific Committee 46-14 to prepare a report on the radiological safety aspects of terrorist activities involving radioactivity. The work of this committee was funded through a contract with the Planning and Preparedness Division of the Office of Emergency Management of the Department of Energy. The committee was composed of a diverse group of individuals with expertise in many areas in addition to radiation safety and emergency response. These areas included law (both federal and state), public communications, and psychosocial aspects of such incidents. The statement of work focused the work of the committee, and the resulting report did not necessarily address all issues of such activities. One of the charges of the committee was to provide guidance as to necessary research and make recommendations regarding the present infrastructure with the responsibility for responding to such incidents. This presentation will provide an overview of NCRP Report No. 138 and focus on some of the critical issues raised in the report. These issues include recognition of the event, the interface between federal, state, and local authorities, exposure limits for the first-responders, clean-up criteria, training and resources, the psychosocial aspects of such events, and communications with the media and the public. This report represented the “beginning” of such considerations. It pointed the way for additional studies and research in this very important area.