



An overview of the responsibilities of parties involved in responding to a transport radiological emergency

This note outlines the responsibilities of various parties when responding to a transport radiological emergency during the civil carriage of dangerous goods of Class 7 (Radioactive Material) by road or rail in Great Britain.

It should be noted that there has never been a transport radiological emergency in the Great Britain that has given rise to significant harm or environmental damage, and the transport of radioactive material is subject to a stringent set of internationally agreed regulations that set prescriptive standards for design and use of all transport packages.

The most directly applicable legislation is The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009 (CDG)¹, which defines the roles and responsibilities outlined below. Other legislation is also applicable, including the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (IRR 2017 is due to come into force on 1 January 2018) and more generally the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Requirements to mitigate a potential transport Incident

Consignor - must have a written plan setting out emergency arrangements appropriate for carriage of the consignment that considers the potential radiological risk, avoids risk of injury to responders and the public, and ensures compliance with legal dose limits. For multiple consignments, the plan must be reviewed, revised and tested. The consignor must provide relevant information to the carrier, including at least the information required on the Transport Document.

Carrier – must have a written plan as well the consignor, which fulfils the same criteria. The carrier must also ensure the vehicle is in good condition and equipped with safety equipment, and the driver is appropriately trained.

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) – Conducts a targeted, proportionate compliance assurance programme to ensure duty-holders comply with the law. This includes witnessing demonstrations of emergency arrangements.

Higher hazard transport operations require prior approval by the GB competent authority (ONR) to ensure that the high standard of safety required by law will be achieved. This applies to some types of packaging and radioactive materials and certain shipments.

¹ CDG itself invokes other regulatory texts, known as ADR, RID and ADN which provide further detailed requirements.

If an Incident has occurred

Consignor - notify the police (999) and the GB competent authority (ONR) of that event (unless either the driver or the carrier has already done so); assist in the intervention and provide ONR with details of the incident that gave rise to that emergency. If a consignor becomes aware that emergency arrangements have been initiated they must notify ONR of the initiation of those arrangements even if no intervention was made. If a package has been involved in an incident it must not be transported unless the consignor has examined it and is satisfied that it complies with the requirements of these Regulations and has issued a certificate to that effect.

Carrier - the driver must notify the police; in England and Wales, the fire and rescue authority and in Scotland, the chief officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; and the consignor. The driver must also initiate the emergency arrangements and assist in the intervention. The carrier must notify the police (unless the driver has already done so) and the GB competent authority (ONR) of that event, and assist in the intervention. As soon as practicable, the carrier must also arrange for the examination of the load so as to determine whether contamination has arisen and, if it has, to arrange for the safe disposal of any part of the load that has been contaminated and for the decontamination of the transport unit or train.

If a notifiable event such as theft or loss of radioactive material occurs, the carrier must notify ONR.

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) – May permit transport of radioactive material outside normal regulatory requirements for the emergency response or under ONR's supervision, where it is necessary in relation to the emergency response, in particular:

- carriage undertaken by breakdown vehicles carrying vehicles which have been involved in accidents or have broken down and contain dangerous goods;
- or to contain and recover the dangerous goods involved in an incident or accident and move them to the nearest appropriate safe place.

Other Public Bodies – There are numerous other public bodies that have a role in responding to a potential transport radiological emergency, including the emergency services, local authorities and environment agencies in addition to the specific roles identified in CDG 2009. Further guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preparation-and-planning-for-emergencies-responsibilities-of-responder-agencies-and-others>