

# DHS Establishes Rail Test Center for Radiation Detection

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will soon begin conducting multiple projects in the Port of Tacoma, Wash., to evaluate technology and concepts of operations for radiation detection that will scan cargo at various points in transfer from ship to rail. By establishing a Rail Test Center (RTC) at the port, DHS will identify and evaluate radiological and nuclear detection solutions for intermodal rail port facilities that can be used across the country.

“The deployment of radiation portal monitors can be much more challenging at seaports where cargo containers depart the port by rail,” said Vayl Oxford, director of the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO). “DNDO is particularly interested in testing the operational needs as well as evaluating innovative technical solutions to fit the unique radiological and nuclear detection requirements of intermodal terminals. Advances in this area will provide greater capabilities to our partners such as the Customs and Border Protection, the United States Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration.”

Projects being considered for further evaluation at the RTC include scanning cargo on the dock, during transport to the rail yard, entering the rail yard, in the container storage stack, during train assembly, and as the train leaves the port.

The Port of Tacoma fulfills the requirements mandated by Section 121(i) of the SAFE Port Act of 2006. The Port of Tacoma is a publicly owned facility and the seventh largest container port in North America – handling more than 70 percent of its total import cargo volume by rail at multiple intermodal rail terminals.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s DNDO is a jointly staffed, national office established to improve the nation’s capability to detect and report unauthorized attempts to import, possess, store, develop, or transport nuclear or radiological material for use against the nation, and to further enhance this capability over time.

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