

Information Sharing on Inadvertent Shipment of Live *Bacillus anthracis* (anthrax)  
to Labs in Multiple U.S. and Overseas Locations  
31 May 2015

The United States Department of Defense (DoD) is collaborating with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in its investigation of an inadvertent shipment of samples that may have contained live *Bacillus anthracis* from a DoD laboratory to laboratories in multiple U.S. states and overseas locations. Samples were prepared in the DoD laboratory using a process that should have inactivated the anthrax bacteria and subsequently were shipped to other DoD-associated laboratories.

Pursuant to its statutory authorities, the CDC began investigating the originating DoD laboratory on 22 May 2015, after one recipient laboratory reported to the CDC that it was able to grow live *Bacillus anthracis* organism from its sample. All U.S. samples are being securely shipped to CDC or its Laboratory Response Network for testing. The CDC testing will determine which laboratories received live samples and what, if any, public health measures and/or decontamination is necessary. The CDC is conducting onsite investigations at the laboratories that received samples, and DoD has stopped shipments of all inactivated material from its laboratories pending results of the CDC investigation.

In the on-site investigation at the originating DoD laboratory on 28 May 2015, the CDC and DoD discovered two additional lots of inactivated *Bacillus* samples that yielded live organisms. As of the date of this report, a total of 28 laboratories in 12 U.S. states and 3 foreign countries are believed to have received suspect samples. Officials in the foreign countries have been notified.

Given the emerging outcomes of the investigation, Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work recommended on 29 May 29, 2015, that any laboratory that received inactivated anthrax spores from DoD stop working with this material until receiving instructions from DoD and the CDC. Additionally, Deputy Secretary Work directed all DoD laboratories that have these materials to test all previously inactivated spore-forming anthrax in the inventory. He also directed the performance of a comprehensive review of DoD laboratory procedures associated with inactivating spore-forming organisms. These matters are to be completed within 30 days.

The U.S. assesses that there is no known risk to the general public and extremely low risk to laboratory workers who handled this material. There are no confirmed cases of anthrax infection in possibly exposed workers.

After the CDC investigation is complete, the department will conduct its own investigation concerning performance and accountability. DoD takes this matter very seriously and is acting with urgency to address this matter within Deputy Secretary Work's 30-day timeline. DoD will update this notification with timely, accurate, and sufficiently detailed information as appropriate, including after the CDC and internal DoD investigations are complete or if the Department determines that the status regarding Article 7 changes.

More information regarding this matter is available at:  
<http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=17305>.

This report has been submitted by the United States, under Article 7, regarding an unexpected event for the information of States Parties.