



## Radioactive Material in Science Classrooms

Some schools use radioactive materials in their science classrooms or laboratories.

- Only use radioactive materials in your school as directed by your teacher.
- Follow instructions on how to use and store radioactive materials properly.

### About Radioactive Material in Science Classrooms

Radioactive materials can be used in some very interesting classroom experiments. For example, using a Geiger counter, a radioactive source and different types of material, such as paper, aluminum foil, and cinder blocks, students can learn about how different types of radiation pass through different objects. Chemistry, physics and earth science labs are some of the places radioactive materials can be used in schools. Schools are responsible for protecting students when radioactive materials are present in classrooms or laboratories, and for ensuring that radioactive materials should be safely stored and labeled when not in use.

To use and store radioactive materials safely in the classroom, be sure to **correctly label containers and seal them**. Clear labels will let teachers and students know which materials are radioactive. The containers should be made of material that will keep the radiation from escaping. For example, radioactive rocks used in science experiments need to be properly shielded to prevent exposure. Container materials used will depend on the type of radiation, but could include wood or lead or other metals.

### Rules and Guidance

#### THE STATES

Many states have formal agreements with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). These agreements give states the authority to license colleges and universities to use radioactive materials for research. States with this agreement with NRC are called Agreement States.

Several states have begun working with their schools to locate and dispose of unwanted radioactive material. The state's emergency management agency or radiation control program usually provides this support to schools.

#### U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC)

Some states do not have formal agreements with NRC. In those states, NRC keeps the authority to license colleges and universities to use radioactive materials for research.

### What you can do

Your school's science department may use radioactive materials. Talk to your science teacher to find out how you can learn more about experiments using radiation in your school.

## Where to learn more

You can learn more about radioactive material in science classrooms by visiting the resources available on the following webpage: <http://www3.epa.gov/radtown/science-classrooms.html#learn-more>.