



SAHPRA's Radiation Control Unit attends Search & Secure Training

Cape Town - The Radiation Control (RadCon) Unit of the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) attended a Search and Secure training held by the Office of Radiological Security (ORS) within the USA's Department of Energy during 19 – 23 May 2025.

The unit underwent training as there were key areas of capacity building and knowledge development identified for Radiation Control to continue to grow, be sustainable, and overall empowerment of the team – so that the Unit is able to continue to deliver on its mandate to protect patients, radiation workers, the public and the environment against over-exposure to ionising radiation, without limiting its beneficial use.

This impactful training included:

- Locating orphan sources to prevent public exposure, environmental contamination and malicious use.
- Recover and secure orphaned sources for safe keeping and return them under regulatory control.
- Build in-country capacity for sustainable orphan-source management.

Note: An orphan source is a sealed radioactive source not under regulatory control— lost, abandoned, stolen, or unclaimed.

The training allowed the RadCon team to integrate into broader nuclear security and emergency response frameworks, mitigate public health, environmental, and socioeconomic risks, and deter non-state actors into developing radiological dispersal devices.

The RadCon team has embraced these take-aways:

- Orphan sources pose real hazards – health, environmental, and security risks.
- Recovery and securement protocols ensure safe removal and final disposition.
- Capacity-building is key: through education, equipment, and regulatory enhancements.
- Sustained national engagement—with international support—establishes a long-term defence against orphan-source threats.

Attendees from the RadCon Unit included Mqondisi Maphophe (Manager), Phineas Mahlangu (Deputy Manager: RadCon Inspectorate), Colbert Ditsepu (Deputy Manager: NIRMED), Fakazi Nhachissambe (Deputy Manager: Radionuclides), Mosidi Matjila (Assistant Manager, Pretoria), Nyawedzeni Tshinaiwe (Assistant Manager, Durban), Maureen Minyuku, Marilda Moosa, Phumlani Sithole, Shirley Ramchunder, Inoc Ndoweni, Malcolm April and Precious Mathebula (Radiation Inspectors), Lazola Nobecu (Medical Physicist), and Mercy Nawa (Radiation Scientist).