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## CHAPTER 6

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# NUCLEAR EMERGENCY SUPPORT TEAM

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### A. General Information

This chapter provides guidance for determining if historical records containing DOE NSI, pertaining to radiological emergency response capabilities, [e.g., Nuclear Emergency Support Team (NEST)] are to be declassified or have their classification retained beyond 25 years in accordance with the provisions of E.O. 12958. For the purpose of this guide, the term NEST includes Nuclear Emergency Support Team, Nuclear Emergency Search Team and all similar or predecessor systems, organizations or capabilities within DOE. ***Documents containing RD and FRD are not addressed by this document and retain present classification.***

The NEST is managed and directed by the NNSA Office of Emergency Response and the Nevada Site Office under authority delegated by the Director of the Office of Emergency Operations. NEST has special expertise and equipment to:

- a. locate lost, stolen, or diverted SNM;
- b. locate, identify, and provide assistance in rendering safe Improvised Nuclear Devices (INDs), nuclear weapons, or Radiological Dispersal Devices (RDDs) made or held in violation of the AEA of 1954; and
- c. aid the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the event of a crime involving the theft or alleged theft of special nuclear material, nuclear weapons, INDs, or RDDs made or held in violation of the AEA of 1954.

Specialized equipment available to NEST includes the Surveillance Accident Nuclear Detection System which has evolved over time. NEST equipment includes radiation detection systems developed for surveying an

area for lost, stolen, or diverted nuclear weapons and special nuclear material. It is also used in delineating the dispersal of radioactive material following a nuclear accident.

### B. Broad Guidance

While the general ability, in either ground or air search modes, to locate radiation sources is unclassified, it is important to protect details of NEST capability to detect lost, stolen or diverted nuclear weapons or special nuclear material. This is especially important when there are lower limits in the ability of NEST equipment to locate the target materials which, if known by an adversary, could be used to defeat NEST equipment and/or procedures. Operational procedures must also be protected to deny a potential adversary the ability to develop measures to counter the rapid execution of the NEST emergency response plan. This is particularly important in view of increased terrorist activities.

Information concerning the composition of NEST, its equipment and system capabilities, its limitations, and its current operational procedures are the foundation of national security emergency preparedness plans relating to a radiological emergency that are anticipated to remain in effect for the foreseeable future. It is expected that improvements in NEST capabilities will be evolutionary, not revolutionary, in nature and, therefore, continued protection is required.

Information describing the location of overseas missions, exercises, or drills could reveal weapon storage locations and thus have the potential to be FRD. Similarly, information associated with these NEST activities could contain classified weapon design information, thereby being RD.

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Historical records, 25 years or older, containing DOE/NNSA NEST NSI not covered by the specific guidance below are unclassified. This does not include records containing information classified by statute such as RD and FRD (AEA of 1954, as amended). These records shall be handled, protected, classified, downgraded, and declassified in accordance with the provisions of the AEA and regulations issued under that Act. Reviewers who are not authorized by

DOE/NNSA to classify or declassify such documents should not attempt final determinations. Refer to appendix A for information on identifying and handling documents containing potential RD/FRD. In all cases where there is a question concerning the sensitivity of the information, it should be referred to the DOE HQ classification office for a classification determination.

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## C. Topics

### 6.0 NUCLEAR EMERGENCY SUPPORT TEAM

- 6.1 Information revealing details of a particular operational mission, training mission, exercise, including names of participants, or that NEST was deployed in response to a specific threat or to a specific location

*NOTE:* Declassify when officially released by DOE/NNSA.

**Retain  
Classification  
(potential for  
RD/FRD)  
[25X2, 8; EV]**

- 6.2 Information revealing details of a credible threat device design to include plausible access denial methods

*NOTE:* Declassify when officially released by DOE/NNSA.

**Retain  
Classification  
(potential for  
RD/FRD)  
[25X2, 8; EV]**

- 6.3 Information revealing capabilities and operating procedures of equipment and systems in use by NEST

*NOTE:* Declassify when technologically different equipment with significantly enhanced capabilities replaces current generation of equipment.

**Retain  
Classification  
[25X2, 8; EV]**

- 6.4 Information revealing actual procedures used by NEST to locate and neutralize lost nuclear weapons or components, INDs, RDDs, or any other mission assigned

*NOTE:* Declassify when officially released by DOE/NNSA.

**Retain  
Classification  
[25X2, 8; EV]**

- 6.5 Information obtained by DOE or DOE contractor personnel on threats, thefts or diversions of nuclear material, etc. used by NEST

*NOTE 1:* Declassify when officially released by DOE/NNSA.

*NOTE 2:* See topic 2.11 for additional guidance on threats.

**Retain  
Classification  
[25X1, 2, 8; EV]**

- 6.6 Information revealing foreign country involvement in a NEST mission, exercise, or drill/training

*NOTE:* Declassify when officially released by DOE/NNSA.

**Retain  
Classification  
[25X2, 8; EV]**

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