

Workers exposed to plutonium at Los Alamos

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Five workers at New Mexico's Los Alamos National Laboratory are being monitored after an accident resulted in plutonium being found inside their noses.

Details of the accident inside building TA-55 Monday are sketchy, but lab official Kevin Roark verified automated sensors picked up the plutonium release, the San Francisco Chronicle reported Friday.

Four other workers in the room weren't contaminated and no contaminants escaped into the environment, Roark told the Chronicle.

Roark said none has shown symptoms that required any medical treatment, but "as a standard precaution, (they) are being monitored by the laboratory's Occupational Medicine group."

Plutonium-239, used in nuclear bombs, is highly carcinogenic, if inhaled into the lungs.

The Chronicle was told of the accident by the Washington-based Project on Government Oversight, which unveils confidential memos about accidents at the laboratory.

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