



Nevada Operations Office News

National Nuclear Security Administration

News Media Contact:

La Tomya R. Glass, 702-295-3521
glass@nv.doe.gov

For Immediate Release:

June 7, 2002

Oboe 9 Successfully Completed

The National Nuclear Security Administration's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory successfully conducted *Oboe 9*, at 2:46 p.m. (PDT) today, at the Nevada Test Site.

Data from monitoring instruments confirmed that the experiment was subcritical, that is, no self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction occurred.

The experiment was designed to answer questions related to material properties of plutonium. The scientific data produced from these experiments supports the National Nuclear Security Administration's Stockpile Stewardship Program to maintain the safety and reliability of the United States nuclear weapons stockpile without conducting underground nuclear tests.

Subcritical experiments are conducted in the U1a complex, 85 miles northwest of Las Vegas. This complex is a safe and secure environment that provides scientists with a laboratory type setting 960 feet below the earth's surface.

Oboe experiments have been conducted in expendable containment vessels, allowing scientists to reuse the same alcove.

Subcritical experiments, while using nuclear material, do not create a critical mass. Therefore no self-sustaining, or critical, nuclear chain reaction occurs. Without this "chain-reaction" there is no nuclear explosion.