Caveat Emptor- pitfalls in procuring Health Physics services / equipment

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Disclaimer

• This presentation is based on my experiences and observations and does not reflect the views of my employer.

• The mention of any manufacturer is not an endorsement or representation of future performance.
Introduction

• Canberra’s introduction of ISOCS, an in situ gamma spectroscopy system.
• Product development delayed by faulty certificate for a gamma standard.
• How many of us are victims of faulty products/services?
• More importantly how can we avoid these situations?
New Products/New Issues
Mid-1980s Indoor Radon

• Device- aquarium pump and alpha track
• Aquarium pump is not a scientific instrument
• Air flows should have been specified.

or

or

?
New Products/New Issues
Post Sept. 11- Homeland Security

- New technologies and products
- Expensive in terms of procurement and maintenance
- Requires advanced knowledge base, or significant commitment of staff time
Quality Assurance/Control

• Probably the most important safeguard for both the vendor and purchaser.
• Case Study- Radon Working Level Meters (WLM) and the EPA Radon Proficiency Program
Success Story

- Calibration of Survey Instruments by Manufacturer
- VDH has QC program before deploying instruments to the field after manufacturer’s calibration
- Staff noticed operational checks not consistent with calibrated values
- Determined manufacturer’s new employee was improperly trained in recording values with open/close probe.
Out sourcing services- There goes the knowledge base!

• Dosimetry Services
• Ever have staff mention that their work may result in an exposure and the badge report indicates a higher exposure on the next report, but on another’s badge?
• Suggest exposing spare badges to see if the dosimetry service reports it.
Accreditation- NAVLAP

Accreditation suggests that a facility has demonstrated its capability to correctly perform a service, *if it chooses to*. 
Conclusion

• Implement a quality assurance program for service and goods procured
• Ensure procurements have adequate specifications
• Stay involved, particularly with new technologies