

# Pentagon: Anthrax shipments broader than first thought

May 29 2015, by Brady Mccombs And Robert Burns

---



This Jan. 27, 2010, file photo, shows the main gate at Dugway Proving Ground military base, about 85 miles southwest Salt Lake City, Utah. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it is investigating what the Pentagon called an inadvertent shipment of live anthrax spores to government and commercial laboratories in as many as nine states, as well as one overseas, that expected to receive dead spores. A Pentagon spokesman, Col. Steve Warren, said the suspected live anthrax samples were shipped from Dugway Proving Ground, an Army facility, using a commercial delivery service. (AP Photo/Jim Urquhart, File)

The Pentagon said Friday that the Army's mistaken shipments of live anthrax to research laboratories were more widespread than it initially reported, prompting the Defense Department's second-ranking official to order a thorough review.

In a statement issued Friday evening, the department said 24 laboratories in 11 states and two foreign countries—South Korea and Australia—are believed to have received suspect [anthrax](#) samples.

The broadening scope of the problem suggests more extensive flaws in procedures used by the Army's Dugway Proving Ground in Utah to ensure that anthrax samples were made fully inert before shipping them to labs. Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work on Friday ordered a comprehensive review of laboratory procedures associated with inactivating anthrax.

Dugway, in a desolate stretch of the Utah desert, has been testing chemical weapons since it opened in 1942.

Earlier Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said suspect samples from Dugway had been sent to 18 labs in nine U.S. states and a military base in South Korea. Later, the Pentagon said the Army may have mistakenly sent live anthrax to a laboratory in Australia in 2008.

CDC spokeswoman Kristen Nordlund said the agency is testing to see which anthrax samples were live. The results are coming in slowly, she said, and the first full set of findings isn't expected until next week.

A Wisconsin commercial laboratory, meanwhile, confirmed Friday it was among the labs that received live [anthrax spores](#) last week. BBI Detection of Madison, which employs fewer than 20 people, remains partially closed. No employees have gotten sick or are in danger, and

there is no danger to the public, said Jackie Lustig, a spokeswoman for Massachusetts-based Alere Inc., which owns BBI.



In this Sept. 18, 2013 file photo, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington. Human error probably was not a factor in the Army's mistaken shipment of live anthrax samples to numerous Odierno told reporters the problem may have been a failure in the technical process of killing, or inactivating, anthrax samples. The process in this case "might not have completely killed" the samples as intended before they were shipped, he said. (AP Photo/Cliff Owen, File)

CDC spokesman Jason McDonald said four people at labs in Delaware, Texas and Wisconsin were recommended to get antibiotics as a precaution, although they are not sick. About two dozen people were being treated for possible exposure at Osan Air Base in South Korea.

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Pentagon: Anthrax shipments broader than first thought (2015, May 29) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-05-pentagon-anthrax-shipments-broader-thought.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.