



Frequently Asked Questions About the Japan Nuclear Crisis

“What Do I Need to Know to Protect Myself?”

1. Is there a danger of radiation making it to the United States?

In response to nuclear emergencies, the NRC works with other U.S. agencies to monitor radioactive releases and predict their path. The NRC continues to monitor information regarding wind patterns near the Japanese nuclear power plants. While it is possible U.S. radiation monitoring equipment will detect an increase, we do not expect harmful levels of radiation to reach the West Coast, Hawaii, Alaska, or U.S. territories in the Pacific.

2. Is the U.S. government tracking the radiation released from the Japanese plants?

Yes. A number of U.S. agencies are involved in monitoring and assessing radiation including the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Department of Energy](#), and NRC. Questions about the domestic monitoring effort should be addressed to the Department of Energy at 202-586-4940. The EPA has posted [information about its monitoring efforts](#).

3. Has the government set up radiation monitoring stations to track the release?

Yes. EPA is utilizing its existing nationwide radiation monitoring system, RadNet, to monitor continuously the nation's air. EPA also regularly monitors drinking water, milk and precipitation for environmental radiation. EPA has stated that it plans to work with its federal partners to deploy additional monitoring capabilities to parts of the western United States and U.S. territories.

4. The radiation “plume” seems to be going out to sea – what is the danger of it reaching Alaska? Hawaii? The west coast?

See response to Question 1.

5. Should I be taking potassium iodide (KI) or other protective measures?

At this time, the NRC does not believe protective measures are necessary in the United States. We do not expect any U.S. states or territories to experience harmful levels of radioactivity that would warrant taking protective measures. In the event circumstances change, U.S. residents should listen to the protective action decisions of their states and counties. These protective action decisions could include sheltering, evacuation, or

taking potassium iodide. The NRC will provide technical assistance to the states should they request it.

6. What are the risks to my children?

See response to Question 5.

7. My family has planned a vacation to Hawaii/Alaska/Seattle next week – is it safe to go, or should we cancel our plans?

The NRC does not expect that residents of the United States or its territories are at any risk of exposure to harmful levels of radiation resulting from the events in Japan. Any changes to travel are a personal decision. The NRC is not aware of any travel restrictions within the United States or its territories.

8. What are the short-term and long-term effects of exposure to radiation?

The NRC does not expect that residents of the United States or its territories are at any risk of exposure to harmful levels of radiation resulting from the events in Japan.

On a daily basis, people are exposed to naturally occurring sources of radiation, such as from the sun, and man-made radiation, such as medical X-rays. The resulting effects are dependent on the strength and type of radiation as well as the duration of exposure. See our [Fact Sheet](#) on the biological effects of radiation

9. I am traveling to Asia (not Japan). Should I adjust my travel plans to avoid flying through plume or being contaminated once on the ground?

You should consult the [State Department](#) for warnings or advisories on international travel.

10. What is the official agency to report radiation numbers and what is the public contact?

NRC regulations require nuclear power plants to report any radiation doses detected at the plant that could be harmful to the public. This would include doses that are generated by the plant or by an external source. During an event in the United States, it is the state's responsibility to provide protective action decisions for public health and safety. For this incident, the Japanese are responsible for reporting the public dose; nevertheless, should radiation doses be detected within the United States, it would still

be the state's responsibility to provide protective action decisions for public health and safety. For questions regarding the federal monitoring effort, contact the Department of Energy at 202-586-4940.

11. Where would I get IOSAT Potassium Iodide if my city should experience fallout from the Japanese nuclear disaster? Is this the right precaution or is there anything else that can be done to protect myself?

We do not expect any U.S. states or territories to experience harmful levels of radioactivity. As such, we do not believe that there is any need for residents of the United States to take potassium iodide. U.S. residents should listen to the protective action decisions by their states and counties. If necessary, protective action decisions could include actions such as sheltering, evacuating, or taking potassium iodide.

For more information on the use of potassium iodide, click [here](#).

Additional information is available from the [Food and Drug Administration](#).

12. My loved one is overseas, how do I find out if he or she is ok?

We are directing public inquiries with regard to concern for loved ones overseas to the State Department, Consular Services at 202-647-7004.

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