

What to do in a radiation emergency

A guide for businesses

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

This booklet is important.

Make sure you keep it in a safe place and ensure you pass it on to any new business should you move on.

July 2024 - July 2027

This booklet has been produced by Portsmouth City Council, Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council in consultation with NHS and the Royal Navy and the Ministry of Defence.



Ministry
of Defence



GOSPORT
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

As one of Britain's leading naval bases, nuclear-powered vessels will occasionally visit Portsmouth.

This booklet provides essential information that you'll need in the highly unlikely event of a leak of radioactive material from a vessel. It is being distributed to all businesses within a 1.5-kilometre radius of the nuclear berths in accordance with emergency regulations.

The drill in an emergency is simple:

Secure your premises - go home or leave the area - tune in

Follow instructions you are given.

Although the chance of ever having to use this booklet in an emergency is very slight, please put it in a safe place where you can find it easily.

For more information on radiation safety, call the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response Team at Portsmouth City Council on **023 9284 1357*** or by emailing **emergency.planning@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**.

This written information is available on request in other formats or languages. Please contact **023 9284 1357*** or by emailing **emergency.planning@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**.

* Please note, this number is for non-emergency queries only. In the event of an emergency please check local news and/or social media for emergency helpline numbers.

What is a radiation emergency?

The design of a nuclear-powered vessel means that an incident involving a vessel's reactor is extremely unlikely. However, if the reactor on board a vessel suffers a serious problem and begins to leak, radioactive particles might escape into the air. There is no possibility of a "nuclear bomb" type explosion.

Who will be affected?

If an incident occurred, it is unlikely this would affect people more than half a kilometre (500 yards) from the vessel, and because of the size of the naval base this would probably only affect people within the base.

Legislation requires people working up to 1.5km away from an operational berth to be given prior information about a nuclear emergency as provided in this booklet. The map on page 5 shows 1.5km distance.

What could happen in a radiation emergency?

Usually, all radioactive material would be contained in the submarine or ship. In some extreme circumstances it is possible that some of this radioactive material could escape and affect areas close

to the vessel or downwind of it.

In such an emergency, people in the naval base who were very close to the vessel could be exposed to gamma radiation, which is very similar to x-rays.

The main risk to the public would be if very tiny radioactive particles were released into the air. They might be carried by the wind and could settle on people or objects that people were in contact with. These tiny particles are unstable and give off radiation.

You could be exposed to radioactive particles by:

- Inhaling contaminated air or gases
- Having contact with contaminated surfaces
- Eating or drinking contaminated food or water
- Direct exposure from particles as they are blown along in a 'plume'

Will this affect food and drink?

It is unlikely that tap water, food or drink in your house that is covered or sealed, will be affected. You should wait for advice before eating anything stored outside or growing in an allotment or garden. More advice and information on this will

be given out in the event of a radiation emergency.

Specific food advice for establishments will be made available from the Food Standards Agency at the time of an incident - please stay tuned to local media.

What can radiation do and how do I stay safe?

Radiation is a form of energy we are exposed to all the time, from natural and man-made sources. In some forms it can be harmful to humans and other living things because it can harm cells. This can result in damage to organs or other long-term effects.

In this type of incident, the main concern for the public would be exposure to radioactive iodate particles.

If you work in the area and live somewhere else, the best way to stay safe is to leave the area. If you also live in the area, you should follow the advice in the resident leaflet you receive to stay inside your home with your windows and doors shut, so none of the radioactive particles can reach you.

What will residents do?

Residents receive a similar leaflet with specific advice telling them to stay in their home and explaining other precautions they should take, such as taking the stable iodine tablets they may be given. You don't need these because you will be leaving the area. If you also live in the area, please follow the advice provided in your resident leaflet.

What happens to schools?

The following schools and nurseries in your area could be affected:

- St George's Primary School
- Portsmouth Grammar School
- Top Tots Day Nursery in the John Pounds Centre

In the event of a radiation emergency occurring, schools will look after children within their care. Even if you do not live in the area, going to collect a child may expose you and them to radiation. When it is safe for children to leave the building, the school will contact you.

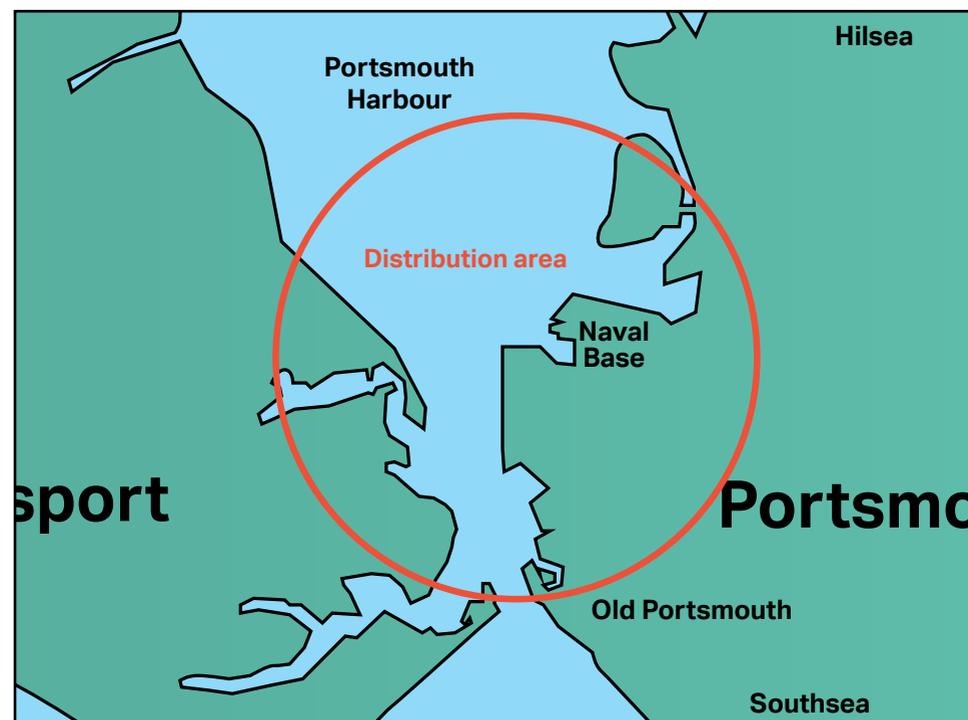
Keep checking sources of information for any further details on what to do.

How will I know about an emergency?

You will know if there is a radiation emergency because the police will tell you, or you will hear or see a news announcement. The naval base siren will also be used – a rising and falling wailing note. This siren is tested at 9:30am on the last Wednesdays of February, June and October.

What do I do when the immediate danger has passed?

You should keep listening and looking for announcements and updates on the news.



We show the area as a circle to make it easier to understand. The actual zone goes out to the nearest natural or landscape boundary. In this guide 'Portsmouth naval base' means the areas at HMS Nelson owned by the MOD and His Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Portsmouth



If you hear an emergency announcement

Secure your premises – shut the windows and doors – shut down fans, fires and ventilators.

Go home or leave the area

Tune in – to local radio, TV or social media for information on when to take your tablets.

Don't use the phone unless you need urgent help.

Wait for the all clear announcement.

Watch for long-term safety information in the news and in leaflets.

A telephone helpline number will be released in the event of an emergency.

Broadcast Information

Information will be broadcast on:

TV: BBC1, BBC2, ITV Meridian

Radio: BBC Radio Solent (96.1 & 103.8 FM)

Heart FM (97.5 FM)

Greatest Hits Radio (South Coast) (105.2 FM)

Capital FM (103.2 FM)

Hits Radio South Coast (107.4 FM)

Express FM (93.7 FM)

Social media channels:

 Portsmouthcitycouncil

 portsmouthtoday

If you would like more information please contact:

Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response Team

Portsmouth City Council

Civic Offices

Guildhall Square

Portsmouth

PO1 2AL

Telephone: 023 9284 1357

You can get this Portsmouth City Council information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 023 9284 1357