

Radiation in Your Everyday Life



WHAT IS BACKGROUND RADIATION? Background radiation exists all around us, no matter where we live. Most background radiation occurs naturally. It mainly comes from natural minerals, some of which are even found in the human body.

DOES THIS MEAN THE AVERAGE AMERICAN IS EXPOSED TO RADIATION EVERY DAY? Yes. In fact, according to the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, the average American is exposed to 620 millirem per year, about half of which comes from natural background radiation.

The Amount of Radiation Absorbed By a Person is Measured in Dose.

To ensure the safety and protection of workers and the public, a world-wide body of experts has established basic principles to safely regulate radiation exposure. These global principles date back to 1928 and are part of the **International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Basic Safety Standards for Radiation Protection**. The IAEA's standards are published jointly with the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Nuclear Energy Agency.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Monitoring

The U.S. Department of Energy works hard to ensure communities near our facilities maintain safe and healthy environments while meeting national and state environmental standards. To do this, the U.S. Department of Energy extensively monitors the environment in and around the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, by collecting and testing samples of air, water, soil, and sediment, as well as animal and plant life. Samples are collected at differing frequencies (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, or biennially), in order to assess the impact, if any, that site operations may have on public health or the environment.

The Department of Energy is committed to working with the community and the state to ensure the safety, health and protection of our workforce, the general public and the environment.

RELATIVE DOSES FROM RADIATION SOURCES

