

Attachment B: Messages for Re-entry Messaging Following a Radiation Emergency

Message 1: How do we know it is safe to go back home?

- Teams of federal, state and local radiation experts have gone through the area to measure radiation levels to make sure that it's safe for you and your family to return.
 - The teams collected air, water, and soil samples to check for radioactive contamination.
 - The teams collected food products and drinking water to make sure that they are safe to consume.
 - The teams use specialized instruments to look for radioactive contamination.
 - These instruments are very sensitive and can detect contamination in the environment and in the food and water supply.
 - The teams also used airplanes and helicopters to fly over the area and measure radiation levels on the ground.
- People can return to their homes if the additional radiation dose they will receive is below the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recommended level of 5 millisieverts (5 mSv) per year.
- The measurements taken in the area show that levels are below the 5 mSv per year limit set by EPA.
 - To put this into perspective:
 - The average dose of radiation people receive from natural background sources, such as rocks, soil, air and space, is 3.6 mSv per year.
 - In comparison, you would get a dose of 10mSv from a CT (medical imaging) scan of your abdomen.

Message 2: What are the possible health effects from living in this area?

- Living in an area with higher radiation levels may increase your risk of developing cancer.
 - However, the additional cancer risk from the radiation in this area is very small compared with the average cancer risk for people in the U.S.
- People living in the U.S. have about a 40% chance of developing cancer.
 - A person's lifestyle and environment can affect this rate, making it higher or lower than 40%.
 - Examples of lifestyle factors that can influence cancer risks include smoking, diet and exercise.
 - Examples of environmental factors that can influence cancer risks include exposure to chemicals and other pollutants.
- People who decide to move back to this area will receive an additional radiation dose of 5 mSv per year.
 - After five years, the cancer risk for people living in this area will go up about 1%.
 - So, instead of having a 40% chance of developing cancer, people in this area will have a 41% chance of developing cancer.

- Even though the increased cancer risk is small, health officials will continue to monitor people's health in this area.

Message 3: What precautions can I take to protect the health of my family?

- When returning home, health officials recommend taking some additional precautions to protect your health.
 - These precautions will decrease your chances of getting radioactive contamination inside your body.
 - Always wash your hands with soap and water before eating.
 - Wear a dust mask when mowing grass or doing other types of yard work that creates dust.
 - Shower after doing outdoor activities such as exercising or working outside.
 - Clean and bandage any cuts and scrapes.

How long will I have to take precautions to protect my family?

- You may not need to take these precautions forever.
 - As time passes, contamination in the environment will “weather.”
 - This means it will get washed away, soak into the soil, or be absorbed by plants.
 - Radioactive contamination will also “decay.”
 - This means it loses energy over time and becomes less radioactive.
 - Radiation experts will continue to monitor the area and will let you know if there are any updates regarding these precautions.

Message 4: What precautions can I take to clean up the radioactive contamination in my house?

- Some contamination from outside may have gotten into your house during the incident.
 - When you first return to your home, there are some simple ways to clean up the radioactive contamination in your house.
 - Start by vacuuming carpeting and furniture.
 - Wear a dust mask, because vacuum cleaners may not catch all the contamination.
 - If your vacuum cleaner has a bag, throw the bag away when you are done.
 - If your vacuum cleaner does not have a bag, take the vacuum outside to empty the canister into a garbage bag, throw the garbage bag away, and rinse out the vacuum cleaner canister.
 - Be sure to wear a mask while performing these steps.

- Next, use a disposable mop to clean your floors, and wipe down countertops, tables, and other surfaces that dust may have settled on with damp paper towels.
 - Throw away the mop and paper towels when you are done.
- Wash bedding and linens.
- Finally, replace your air conditioning/heater filter, and dispose of the filter in the trash.
- Be sure to wear a mask while performing this activity.
- Your health department can test your home for contamination after you clean it.

Message 5: How do we know the food and water supply is safe?

- Radiation experts are analyzing and monitoring food and drinking water samples to make sure they are safe for you and your family to consume.
 - These experts are also checking crops, livestock, wild game and fish to make sure these are safe to eat.
 - They are also checking milk and drinking water to make sure these are safe to drink.
- Check with local agricultural authorities before:
 - Planting food crops or disturbing soil by plowing, tilling, or digging.
 - Eating any food grown in your own personal garden.
- When you return home, food in sealed containers, such as cans, bottles, bags, or boxes, is safe to consume.
 - Check the expiration date to make sure the food has not gone bad.
 - Clean the outside of the packaging with a damp paper towel before opening.
 - Throw the paper towel away and wash your hands before eating.
- Wash cookware and dishes prior to cooking or serving food with them.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating them.