

What to do in a **radiation emergency**

A guide for residents

www.portsmouth.gov.uk



The information
in this guide is
very important.
Please keep it
in a safe place
where you can
find it easily.

This guide tells you what you need to do in the extremely unlikely event of a radiation emergency at Portsmouth naval base.

It has been produced by Portsmouth City Council, Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, in consultation with the NHS and the Royal Navy. It is our duty to publish the guide under the government's Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (REPPIR).

The design of nuclear-powered submarines and ships means the likelihood of a radiation accident is very remote. There is absolutely no risk of an 'atom bomb'-type explosion. If an accident happened, it probably wouldn't affect people more than half a kilometre (500 yards) from the vessel.

By law we provide information to everyone who lives within 1.5 kilometres (1 mile) of the base (see map on p4). You live in this zone.

**Advice on what to do in an emergency
is simple:**



Go in, Stay in, Tune in



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Map of affected area

This map shows the approximate area in which this leaflet is distributed.



In this guide 'Portsmouth naval base' means the areas at HMS Nelson owned by the MOD and Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB), Portsmouth, as well as the Port of Portsmouth.

What could happen in a radiation emergency?

Usually, all radioactive material would be contained in the submarine or ship. In some circumstances it is possible that it 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.

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'

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.

What should I do if there's an emergency?

Follow the **Go in, Stay in, Tune in** advice.

Go in

In an emergency the best thing to do is go indoors.

- **Close all your doors and windows** to reduce the risk of contamination entering the building.
- **Switch off** fans, ventilation equipment or appliances such as central heating boilers and gas fires, which draw air from outside. This will help stop any contamination entering the building.
- **Put out** or damp down open fires

Stay in

- **Don't go outside**, where radiation could be higher, unless you're told to.
- **Keep pets indoors**, to stop them bringing possible contamination into the house.
- **If your children are at school, the school will look after them** – going to collect your children may expose you and them to radiation.

Tune in

- During an emergency, information and advice will be given out on local radio and TV programmes, and on the internet.
- **Keep listening** and watching
- **Follow any instructions** you are given

Announcements will be on TV and radio stations and websites including:

- BBC TV
- ITV Meridian
- Radio Solent (96.1 FM, 999 MW)
- Heart FM (96.7, 97.5 FM)
- Capital (103.2 FM)
- Wave (105.2 FM)
- The Breeze (107.4 FM)
- Jack FM (106 FM)
- Express FM (93.7 FM)
- and local digital stations

More information:

We will publish up-to-date information and advice on www.portsmouth.gov.uk (the Portsmouth City Council site).

Helpline:

In a radiation emergency you can call our helpline, 0800 085 0375

Health issues:

Call NHS Direct on 111 or go to www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Take potassium iodate tablets if you're told to

Exposure to radioactive material can be hazardous. But taking potassium iodate tablets minimises the health risks, by preventing the body absorbing certain harmful material.

Portsmouth City Council staff will deliver the tablets to all homes in the affected area. Each household will receive a strip of 10 tablets (enough for five people) and an information pack. If you need more tablets then ask the person who delivers them or phone 0800 085 0375.

The authorities will tell you when to take the tablets, so keep tuned to the local radio stations, TV, our website and social media sites.

Where appropriate, children at school will be given potassium iodate tablets.

After taking the tablets you should still stay indoors. The tablets help to protect you, but staying inside is still the best protection.

If you have friends or relatives more than 1.5km (1 mile) downwind from the base there will be no immediate need for them to take the tablets. In the hours following an emergency the council and the health services will decide if the 1.5km zone should be expanded, based on contamination levels. It's unlikely they will have to take this step.

Don't use the phone unless you urgently need help

In an emergency, mobile and landline networks might be overloaded. If you must make a call, please keep it short.

Don't leave the area unless you're advised to

You will be much safer indoors.

There will probably be no need for an evacuation. But if you are advised to leave, follow the advice you're given.

If you do have to leave, you should stay with friends or relatives outside the affected area. If you don't have anyone you can stay with, we will make special arrangements to look after you in a safe place.

Use your own transport. If you don't have transport, you'll be told where to meet and transport will be provided.

Entry to evacuated areas will be carefully controlled until the emergency has ended.

**If you are advised to evacuate,
use this checklist:**

- Get your family and pets together.
- Get a large bag or suitcase and pack the following things.
 1. Warm clothing and bedding.
 2. Food that your family and pets need.
 3. Medicines that your family needs.
 4. Baby food, clothes and nappies if needed.
 5. Private documents and valuables, such as bank books and passports.
 6. Books and toys for children if needed.
- Make sure fires are out and that cookers, ventilation equipment, fans, TVs, electric fires and other appliances are switched off and unplugged.
- Lock up your house and any other buildings and leave.
- Use the space here to write down any other things that you think you will need to remember:

More information

Arrangements for schools

The following schools and nurseries could be affected:

- St George's Primary School
- Portsmouth Grammar School
- Portsea Community Day Nursery
- University Nursery

They have potassium iodate tablets for all the children and staff in their care. In the event of an accident the school will look after the children – going to collect your children may expose you and them to radiation. When it is safe for children to leave the building the school will contact you.

Schools more than 1.5km from the naval base will be told about any accident by the council.

Schools will look after any pupils whose parents live within the 1.5km zone and who may not be able to collect them.

Radiation

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 damage cells. This can result in damage to organs or other long-term effects.

Food and drink

It is unlikely that tap water, food or drink in your house that is covered or sealed, will be affected. More information will be given out on the news as the incident goes on.

When the immediate danger has passed

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

How to find out more

If you would like to find out more about the Ministry of Defence's nuclear-powered vessels, visit the Royal Navy website:

www.royalnavy.mod.uk

If you would like to find out more about the emergency plan for the area around the naval base you can find a copy of it on the Portsmouth City Council website at **www.portsmouth.gov.uk**. The plan is called Portsafes.

You can get more information on radiation and the REPPiR regulations from these websites:

- Public Health England:
www.dh.gov.uk/health/tag/public-health-england
- Health and Safety Executive:
www.hse.gov.uk

More copies of this leaflet are available by:

- Writing to:
**Civil Contingencies Unit
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2BG**
- Emailing **emergency.planning@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**
- Calling **(023) 9268 8052**

You can also read and download leaflets from our website at **www.portsmouth.gov.uk**



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You can get this
Portsmouth City
Council information
in large print, Braille,
audio or in another
language by calling
9283 4092.



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