



Southern California Preparedness Foundation

Nuclear Safety Checklist

More than 116 million U.S. citizens live within a 50 mile radius of a nuclear power plant. That's more than 1 in 3! The key to surviving a nuclear incident is minimizing exposure to internal (that which comes from ingesting contamination) and external radiation.

Items that can be used to help protect you and your home

- Rolls of masking tape (blue "painter's masking tape" preferred for easy removal), duct tape
- Boxes of exam gloves, large (easier to remove)
- Swiffer[®]-style damp mop (or wet mop)
- Brita[®]-style water filter for faucet, and pitcher for when tap water is unavailable
- Water filtered vacuum (shop vac, etc.)
- Sponges (lots, as you'll use a new one for each cleaning operation)
- Paper towels (lots)
- Sheet plastic (roll or folded)
- Plastic bags (lots)
- Sturdy trash containers, 13-gallon size, at least one inside and outside main point of egress/ingress
- Supply of 13-gallon trash bags for disposal of contaminated cleaning supplies, clothing, etc.
- Hand-held radiation detector (Google search)
- Install a HEPA filter on your central air system, or inexpensive filter that you change daily (have a supply ready)

Tips to protect yourself when a harmful release of radiation occurs

- By keeping your household surfaces clean, you are doing everything you can to prevent contamination from getting inside your body.
- Think of radiation as dust that settles on surfaces (you and your pets included!) that can be consistently and carefully cleaned and disposed of properly. Internal contamination, from ingesting or inhalation, is 20 to 100 times more harmful to your body than external exposure.
- DO NOT dry-dust or sweep because this will cause dust, and potentially radioactive isotopes, to become airborne where they can settle onto surfaces or be inhaled. Feather-type dusters should especially be avoided.
- DO NOT use fans or air conditioning units to draw outside air into your house. Try to keep indoor air from becoming too dry.
- Run the air conditioner 12 hours a day on the recirculation setting, if you have the option. Most home A/C units do not draw in outside air, but be sure to check and if your unit can, learn how to turn the option off. Use the recirc setting for your vehicle when traveling.
- Daily or even twice-daily vacuuming of household surfaces is recommended.
- Keep dinnerware and utensils in clean cabinets with doors, or place them in containers with sealing lids. Remove coverings carefully to avoid landing on clean surfaces.
- Consider using plastic (disposable) utensils and plates, cups, etc. Use once and discard.
- Rinse cooking utensils and can openers with clean filtered water before use. The best filters use activated charcoal or reverse osmosis, which are very effective at filtering out radioisotopes. (Note: Reverse osmosis uses LOTS of water.)
- Rinse the outside of food cans and packages with filtered water before opening.
- Drink only filtered water (use Brita-style pitcher).

Practice these procedures for several days or even a week or two after the danger appears to have passed

- Think of radiation as an invisible layer of dust on all surfaces that needs to be carefully cleaned and managed.
- Create an air tight seal in your home by sealing windows, unused doors, cracks, etc. with duct tape or similar.
- Aggressively clean surfaces without creating dust storms by using wet wipes and water-filtered vacuums.
- Keep food in clean, sealed containers.
- Clean your floor and furniture with a water-filtered vacuum.
- When you have to go outside, wear a set of coveralls or a duster over your clothes. Keep these clothes outside.
- Shower (with filtered water if possible) every time you come indoors after having spent more than a few minutes outdoors.



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Practice these procedures for several days or even a week or two after the danger appears to have passed (cont)

- Use good quality dust masks to cover you mouth and nose, especially when venturing outside. Dispose of masks when re-entering (use that 13-gal can you placed just outside your door).
- Launder sheets, handkerchief masks, and outdoor clothing at least once a day in filtered water.
- Keep all windows closed, even if it's nice outside or not nice inside, and sealed with duct tape or similar.
- Seal all doors that open to the outside with duct tape or similar.
- Use only one door for ingress/egress.
- Carry young children while outdoors or going to/from a vehicle to minimize their contact with contamination.
- Keep pets indoors as much as possible. Wipe them down with damp paper towels using filtered water upon re-entry.
- Sleep at least two feet above the floor.
- Keep pots, pans, plates, utensils in clean cabinets.
- Rinse cookware, cooking utensils, plates, glassware, etc., with filtered water before use.
- Rinse the outside of all food cans and packages with filtered water before opening.
- Do not do anything that can stir up dust (don't use a duster or a regular vacuum). Consider any dust to be contaminated.

Sources of information before and after an incident

- Visit local "hangouts" such as bars, bistros, nightclubs, etc., that nuclear workers visit after their shift to pick up valuable insight and info. WARNING: This suggestion is for eavesdropping purposes only. Do not confront any worker or challenge what you may hear. If they know you're listening, they'll likely clam up.
- Internet resources
 - enformable.com
 - safecast.org (world-wide; with emphasis on radiation monitoring in Japan)
 - world-nuclear-news.org (free email subscription)
 - enviroreporter.com
 - nuclearhotseat.com (also has podcasts)
 - San Onofre info: email rho Hoffman@animatedsoftware.com and request to be added to his emailing list
 - ex-skf.blogspot.com (reports on Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident)
 - seintl.com (good source for radiation detectors)
 - <http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/ki.asp> (info on potassium iodide, KI, pills)
 - acehoffman.org (free book download, *The Code Killers*, about DNA and ionizing radiation)