Restricted Zone Guide for Emergency Managers

Why designate a Restricted Zone?

Restricted zones are established to protect people from chronic exposure to low-level radiation. Access must be controlled to these areas where the population had been evacuated or relocated.

Protective Action Guidelines (PAGs)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established conservative protective action guidelines (PAG) for the levels of radioactive contamination that indicate the need for relocation:

- First-year exposure: 2 rem total effective dose equivalent or higher (TEDE – the whole body internal and external dose).
- Any single year following the first year: 0.5 rem TEDE or higher.
- Cumulative dose over 50 years: 5 rem TEDE or higher.
- Advise SEOC staff of the current Emergency Classification Level (with a brief explanation) and conduct initial SEOC briefing.

Areas where these contamination levels are exceeded must be designated as restricted zones until a combination of remediation efforts and natural radioactive decay allow for safe long-term residency. Radiation monitoring will be ongoing in any area declared a restricted zone.

Considerations for Implementation of Restricted Zones

The following guidance may be used to develop an initial restricted zone plan:

Designate traffic control points and staffing to prevent and control entry (State Patrol, county).

- Monitor the situation and maintain security inside the restricted zone and on its boundaries.
- Discuss availability of the National Guard to assist (State, Military Affairs).
- Limit re-entry into a restricted zone to essential personnel only.
- All persons entering a restricted zone must be registered, briefed on radiation exposure, and issued dosimetry. In some cases a radiation safety escort may be required.
- All persons leaving a restricted zone must be monitored for radiological contamination, and may need to be decontaminated. Existing facilities may be used, or new ones established. Transportation to these sites will be provided.