

What to do in a radiation emergency

A guide for residents in the Bailiwick of Guernsey

This guide tells you what you need to do in the extremely unlikely event of a radiation emergency in the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

The information in this guide is very important. Although the chance of ever having to use this advice in an emergency is extremely unlikely, please put it in a safe place where you can find it easily.

What is a radiation emergency?

A radiation emergency is the release of radioactive material that may be harmful to health.

What are the causes of radiation emergencies in the Bailiwick of Guernsey?

The most significant radiation risk for the Bailiwick of Guernsey is if there was an accident at the French nuclear facilities adjacent to us on the Cotentin peninsula.

What could happen in a radiation emergency?

In the event of a nuclear accident, it is possible that some of this radioactive material could escape and affect areas downwind of it. In such an emergency, 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. These tiny particles are unstable and give off radiation.

What are the hazards from a radiation emergency?

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'

What can radiation do and how do I stay safe?

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 lead to biological effects such as cell changes. This can result in damage to organs or other long-term effects.

It is possible that these changes may not show up until sometime after exposure to radiation.

The main way to stay safe is to stay inside with your windows and doors shut, then none of the radioactive particles can reach you. More instructions on what to do are on the following pages.

For more information on radiation safety, visit [Public Health Protection in Radiation Emergencies](#).

How will I know about an emergency?

There will be an announcement on the social media channels of the States of Guernsey and Guernsey Police, local radio stations, and television channels.

If an emergency happens during school hours and you have a child at school, you will also be contacted by the school.

Information will be broadcast on:

TV:	ITV Channel Islands BBC Channel Islands
Radio:	Island FM BBC Guernsey
Twitter:	States of Guernsey (@govgg)
Facebook:	States of Guernsey

The advice in this booklet will be repeated. Follow the instructions that you are given.

What should I do in a radiation emergency?

The procedure in an emergency is simple:

- **Go in**
- **Stay in**
- **Tune in**

Go In

In a radiation emergency the best thing to do is go indoors. You will be given advice as part of the messaging. Part of this advice will include timescales before any radiation fallout is likely to reach the Bailiwick. This will allow residents time to prioritise actions before heading indoors. This may include collecting children from school and purchasing essential items for a minimum of 24hrs isolation.

- 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 levels could be higher, unless you're told to.

- Keep pets indoors, to stop them bringing possible contamination into the house
- Contact the helpline if medication or critical items are required

Tune In

- During an emergency, we will publish up-to-date information and advice on the:
- Information and advice will also be available on the States of Guernsey social media channels
- It will also be published on the following official websites:

- States of Guernsey's website [GOV.GG - States of Guernsey](https://gov.gg)
- States of Alderney website [States of Alderney Home Page - States of Alderney \(gov.gg\)](https://statesofalderney.gov.gg)
- Sark Chief Pleas website [Sark Chief Pleas - Isle of sark government](https://sark.gv.gg)
- Information and advice will also be on local radio and TV and websites
- Keep listening and watching
- Follow any instructions you are given

Local radio stations include:

- **Island FM**
- **BBC Guernsey**

Helpline: In a radiation emergency a helpline will be set up and the number will be included in the various media platforms.

Health issues: Only call 999 if you have a health emergency – do not call this number for general enquiries.

Don't use mobile telephones or landlines unless you urgently need help or advice.

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

Will this affect food and drink?

It is unlikely that tap water, food or drink in your house that is covered or sealed, will be affected. Do not use food grown in your garden unless picked before the emergency. More advice and information on this will be given out as an incident progresses.

Advice will also be given to farmers, fishers and other food producers.

What do I do when the immediate danger has passed?

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

The States of Guernsey will liaise with responding agencies to deal with the release of information and, as soon as it is completely safe to go outside again, there will be announcements on local radio, television, and social media channels. In the days following the emergency, health experts will carry out checks on the air, water and soil to make sure it continues to be safe. There will be more information in all news media - including the Guernsey Press - on what further action you need to take, if any. An information helpline number will also be made available.

Remember, the risk of this sort of emergency happening is extremely remote, but being prepared is nevertheless sensible.