

## **Instructions No. 2: Instructions to Public on How to Perform Decontamination at Home**

You may have been exposed to low levels of radioactive materials (“dust”). The dust may have gotten on your hair, skin, clothing, and personal property. Depending on your location, the radioactive dust could be on your vehicle, home, yard, lawn furniture, BBQ grill, or anything outside. The dust may have gotten on your jewelry, wallet or purse, or other personal belongings if you were near the incident. You are not in immediate danger from this radioactive dust; however, you need to go home or to another designated area to remove the dust, which is called decontamination. Because radiation cannot be seen, smelled, felt, or tasted, people at the site of an incident will not immediately know if they have been exposed to radioactive materials. Follow these instructions to limit your contamination.

Get out of the immediate area quickly. Go directly home, inside the nearest safe building, or to an area to which you are directed by law enforcement or health officials. *Do not go to a hospital unless you have a medical condition that requires treatment.*

If radioactive dust is on your clothes, removing them as quickly as possible will remove up to 90% of the dust, while helping to prevent you from breathing in or ingesting the dust and will also reduce the length of time that you are exposed to radiation. When removing the clothing be careful of any clothing that has to be pulled over the head. Try to either cut it off or prevent the outer layer from coming in contact with the nose and mouth area. You may also hold your breath while carefully pulling clothing over the head. Removal of clothes should be done in a garage or outside storage area if available, where the ground can be washed off easily. If an outside area is not available, the removal of clothing should take place in a room where the floor can be easily cleaned, such as a tub or shower area. Swiffer® pads are good for decontaminating smooth surfaces including the floor. Clothing should be rolled up with the outside “in” to minimize spreading the dust.

If possible, place the clothing in a plastic bag (double bagging is best to reduce the chances of it breaking), and leave it in an out-of-the-way area, such as the corner of a room or garage. Keep people away from it to reduce their exposure to radiation. You may be asked to bring this bag for follow-up tests or for disposal at a later time.

Keep cuts and abrasions covered when handling anything you think has the radioactive dust on it to avoid getting radioactive material in the wound.

Shower and wash all of the exposed parts of your body and hair using lots of soap and lukewarm water to remove the dust. Simple washing will remove most of the radioactive dust. Do not use abrasive cleaners, or scrub too hard. Do not use hair conditioners in your hair because it could trap the radioactive dust onto your hair.

You can also wash your valuables and other personal property. You can wash off valuables and small items at the same time that you wash yourself. If an outside area is not available or if the items are small, the decontamination should take place in a room where the floor can be easily cleaned, such as a tub or shower area. Swiffer® pads are good for decontaminating smooth surfaces including the floor. Wash the items with lots of water and soap. A scrub brush can be used to reach small spaces. Only decontaminate items that you can easily move to this location as other larger items can be washed off in place.

## **Instructions No. 2 (Continued)**

For large items, decontamination should take place where the ground can be washed easily, like a sidewalk or driveway. Using a hose, wash off the roof of your home, hard surfaces (driveways, sidewalks, decks, patios), lawn furniture, grills, toys, and any other surface or item outside. You should NOT attempt to wash your lawn, gardens, or bare soil areas.

Clothes may be washed in your washing machine or at a commercial laundry mat. Any item that is water resistant can easily be washed by hand with water and soap, like jewelry, coins, paper money, credit cards, plastic identification cards, etc. Rinse all dust down the drain with lots of water.

Do not contain the used wash water; instead it should be flushed down the drain or if outside into the stormwater/sewer system. If the wash water pools outside, it should be swept into drainage areas.

If you are going to a reception center to be monitored for the radioactive dust, it is best to change clothes and shower *before* being monitored. Do not bring your valuables or personal property to the reception center.

Listen to the news for additional information and guidance.

(Adapted from CRCPD 2006)