



A joint release from the Office of the Governor, and the departments of Military and Veterans Affairs, and Health and Social Services

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Contact: Jeremy Zidek, DMVA, 907-428-7077, Cell: 907-441-2337, jeremy.zidek@alaska.gov
Greg Wilkinson, DHSS, 907-269-7285, Cell: 907-382-7032, gregory.wilkinson@alaska.gov

State continues radiation monitoring; reviews response plan

Still no immediate or anticipated threat in Alaska

Anchorage, ALASKA — Scientists working in the state of Alaska Public Health Laboratory in Anchorage continue to monitor levels of radiation in Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks. To date, there have been no levels indicated above the normal background range.

“Historical and current background radiation levels, typically fall within a normal range of 5 to 50 gross beta counts* per minute,” said Dr. Bernd Jilly, director of the state labs. “Concerns would arise if levels were to exceed 2,000 gross beta counts per minute for an extended period of time — that time would depend on the magnitude of the radiation. Our Anchorage monitor takes readings 15 times a day, and so far, we’ve seen nothing above the normal background readings.”

The state’s monitoring equipment is part of RadNet, a national network of monitoring stations that regularly collect air, precipitation, drinking water, and milk samples for analysis of radioactivity. A secondary monitoring system draws air through discs which are then sent to the federal Environmental Protection Agency in Alabama for analysis. Those data are published on the EPA website.

State officials will notify the public through regular media channels and department websites should the situation change.

State preparedness officials have developed and practiced a response plan that would be enacted should radiation levels rise to a level of concern in Alaska. The plan is similar to how the state responded to the H1N1 pandemic.

The Alaska Section of Epidemiology has published a summary bulletin covering earthquakes, tsunami, radiation and public preparedness. The bulletin can be accessed at:

http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2011_05.pdf

For more information we recommend the following websites:

Alaska NOAA: <http://wcatwc.arh.noaa.gov/>

State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/>

The state encourages everyone to develop a preparedness kit: www.ready.alaska.gov/prepare

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*Gross Beta Counts — the number of radioactive particles that impact a monitor per minute.