



Solano County Office of Emergency Services

www.solanocounty.com/oes

How Can I Protect Myself During a Radiation Emergency?

- After a release of radioactive materials, local authorities will monitor the levels of radiation and determine what protective actions to take.
- The most appropriate action will depend on the situation. Tune to the local emergency response network or news station for information and instructions during any emergency.
- If a radiation emergency involves the release of large amounts of radioactive materials, you may be advised to “shelter in place,” which means to stay in your home or office; or you may be advised to move to another location.
- If you are advised to shelter in place, you should do the following:
 - Close and lock all doors and windows.
 - Turn off fans, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring in fresh air from the outside. Only use units to recirculate air that is already in the building.
 - Close fireplace dampers.
 - If possible, bring pets inside.
 - Move to an inner room or basement.
 - Keep your radio tuned to the emergency response network or local news to find out what else you need to do.
- If you are advised to evacuate, follow the directions that your local officials provide. Leave the area as quickly and orderly as possible. In addition –
 - Take a flashlight, portable radio, batteries, first-aid kit, supply of sealed food and water, hand-operated can opener, essential medicines, and cash and credit cards.
 - Take pets only if you are using your own vehicle and going to a place you know will accept animals. Emergency vehicles and shelters may not be able to accept animals.

For more information about evacuation, see the CDC fact sheet [Facts About Evacuation During a Radiation Emergency](#).

For more information about sheltering, see the CDC fact sheet [Sheltering in Place During a Radiation Emergency](#) or the American Red Cross fact sheet [Shelter-in-Place](#).



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For more information about emergency response, check the following Web sites:

- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [American Red Cross: Disaster Services](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Emergency Management](#)

Should I Take Potassium Iodide During a Radiation Emergency?

- Potassium iodide (KI) should only be taken in a radiation emergency that involves the release of radioactive iodine, such as an accident at a nuclear power plant or the explosion of a nuclear bomb. A “dirty bomb” most likely will not contain radioactive iodine.
- A person who is internally contaminated with radioactive iodine may experience thyroid disease later in life. The thyroid gland will absorb radioactive iodine and may develop cancer or abnormal growths later on. KI will saturate the thyroid gland with iodine, decreasing the amount of harmful radioactive iodine that can be absorbed.
- KI only protects the thyroid gland and does not provide protection from any other radiation exposure.
- Some people are allergic to iodine and should not take KI. Check with your doctor about any concerns you have about potassium iodide.

For more information about KI, see the CDC fact sheet Potassium Iodide (KI) or check the following Web sites:

- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Frequently Asked Questions on Potassium Iodide \(KI\)](#)
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Potassium Iodide as a Thyroid Blocking Agent in Radiation Emergencies](#)