

Emergency arrangements

Emergency arrangements in case of nuclear incident or accident

Despite all the safety measures that are taken in the design and operation of nuclear facilities, a possibility remains that an accident may happen which could give rise to a nuclear or radiological emergency. In some circumstances, this may give rise to the release of radioactive material within the facility. In the case of a severe accident, radioactive material may be released into the atmosphere and be transported far beyond the nuclear facility. In order to mitigate the consequences of a nuclear or radiological emergency as much as possible, adequate preparations for a timely, controlled, coordinated and effective response must be established and maintained. Such preparations include, for example, **early-warning systems**, **plans for evacuation** of the local population, the maintenance of **stocks of essential supplies**, arrangements for **decontamination** of people and the environment, and infrastructure for the **treatment of casualties**.

The emergency arrangements not only take account of the **immediate actions required**, but also of the **longer-term consequences** of nuclear accidents. As severe accidents may result in radioactive contamination beyond the nuclear facility itself, response arrangements must be in place in the local area surrounding the facility as well as in the country as a whole. Countries that do not operate nuclear power plants also have emergency arrangements in place due to potential transboundary effects. The response arrangements in place in a particular area will depend on the distance to the nearest nuclear facility, the demographics and the geography.

An **effective emergency response** calls for the development and implementation of emergency plans, procedures and necessary arrangements at local, national and international levels to mitigate, as far as is possible, the harmful consequences of accidents for the public and the environment. The International Conventions require governments to allocate clear responsibilities for preparedness and response to a nuclear or radiological emergency and to maintain the necessary resources for an effective response.

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