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Measurement of radioactivity in the environment — Guidelines for effective dose assessment using environmental monitoring data —

Part 1: Planned and existing exposure situation

*Mesurage de la radioactivité dans l'environnement — Lignes
directrices pour l'évaluation de la dose efficace à l'aide de données de
surveillance environnementale —*

Partie 1: Situation d'exposition existante et planifiée



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 85, *Nuclear energy, nuclear technologies, and radiological protection*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Radiological protection*.

A list of all the parts in the ISO 20043 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Everyone is exposed to natural radiation. The natural sources of radiation are cosmic rays and naturally occurring radioactive substances existing in the Earth itself and inside the human body. Human activities involving the use of radiation and radioactive substances (NORM) cause radiation exposure in addition to the natural exposure. Some of those activities, such as the mining and use of ores containing naturally-occurring radioactive substances and the production of energy by burning coal that contains such substances, simply enhance the exposure from natural radiation sources. Nuclear installations use radioactive materials and produce radioactive effluent and waste during operation and on their decommissioning. The use of radioactive materials in industry, agriculture and research is expanding around the globe.

All these human activities generally also give rise to radiation exposures that are only a small fraction of the global average level of natural exposure. The medical use of radiation is the largest and a growing man-made source of radiation exposure in developed countries. It includes diagnostic radiology, radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and interventional radiology.

Radiation exposure also occurs as a result of occupational activities. It is incurred by workers in industry, medicine and research using radiation or radioactive substances, as well as by passengers and crew during air travel and for astronauts. The average level of occupational exposures is generally similar to the global average level of natural radiation exposure^[1].

As the uses of radiation increase, so do the potential health risks and the public's concerns increase. Thus, all these exposures are regularly assessed in order to

- a) improve the understanding of global levels and temporal trends of public and worker exposure,
- b) evaluate the components of exposure so as to provide a measure of their relative importance, and
- c) identify emerging issues that may warrant more attention and scrutiny. While doses to workers are usually directly measured, doses to the public are usually assessed by indirect methods using radioactivity measurement results performed on various sources: waste, effluent and/or environmental samples.

To ensure that the data obtained from radioactivity monitoring programs support their intended use, it is essential in the dose assessment process that stakeholders (the operators, the regulatory bodies, the local information committee and associations, etc.) agree on appropriate data quality objectives, methods and procedures for: the sampling, handling, transport, storage and preparation of test samples; the test method; and for calculating measurement uncertainty. An assessment of the overall measurement uncertainty also needs to be carried out systematically. As reliable, comparable and 'fit for purpose' data are an essential requirement for any public health decision based on radioactivity measurements, international standards of tested and validated radionuclide test methods are an important tool for the production of such measurement results. The application of standards serves also to guaranty comparability over time of the test results and between different testing laboratories. Laboratories apply them to demonstrate their technical competences and to complete proficiency tests successfully during interlaboratory comparisons, two prerequisites to obtain national accreditation.

Today, over a hundred international standards, prepared by Technical Committees of the International Organization for Standardization, including those produced by ISO/TC 85 working groups, and the International Electrotechnical Commission, are available for measuring radionuclides in different matrices by testing laboratories.

Generic standards help laboratories to manage the measurement process and specific standards describing test methods are used specifically by those in charge of radioactivity measurement. These later cover test methods for:

- Natural radionuclides, including ^{40}K , ^3H , ^{14}C and those originating from the thorium and uranium decay series, in particular ^{226}Ra , ^{228}Ra , ^{234}U , ^{238}U , ^{220}Rn , ^{222}Rn , ^{210}Pb , which can be found in every material from natural sources or can be released from technological processes involving naturally

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occurring radioactive materials (e.g. the mining and processing of mineral sands or phosphate fertilizer production and use), and

- Man-made radionuclides, such as transuranium elements (americium, plutonium, neptunium, and curium), ^3H , ^{14}C , ^{90}Sr and gamma emitting radionuclides found in waste, liquid and gases effluent and in environmental matrices (air, soil, water, biota) as a result of authorized releases into the environment and of fallout resulting from the explosion in the atmosphere of nuclear devices and accidents, such as those that occurred in Chernobyl and Fukushima. Radionuclides, such as ^3H and ^{14}C occur both naturally and as by-products of the operation of nuclear reactors.

The ICRP recognises three types of exposure situations^[2] that are intended to cover the entire range of exposure situations: planned, emergency and existing exposure situations. Planned exposure situations involve the planned introduction and operation of sources (previously categorised as practices). Emergency exposure situations are situations requiring prompt action in order to avoid or to reduce adverse consequences. Existing exposure situations are exposure situations that already exist when a decision on control is taken, such as those caused by enhanced natural background radiation (e.g. exposure to radon in existing buildings).

The fraction of the background dose rate to man from environmental radiation, mainly gamma radiation, is very variable and depends on factors such as the radioactivity of the local rock and soil, the nature of building materials and the construction of buildings in which people live and work.

This document sets out principles and guidance for the radiological characterisation of the environment needed for checking the results of

- prospective assessment of dose to the public arising from exposure to ionizing radiation which may arise from planned discharges to the atmosphere and to the aquatic environment or following remediation action;
- retrospective assessment for dose that may be made for discharges or disposals that were not initially covered by an authorization/permit delivered by a national regulatory body (e.g. contaminated land or dose associated with accidental releases of radionuclides into the environment).

This document is one of a set of generic ISO Standards on measurement of radioactivity.

Example of dose assessment in different exposure situations, modified from Reference [3]

Situation	Type of assessment	
	Prospective	Retrospective
Planned	Determining compliance with the relevant dose constraint (dose limit or regulatory requirements). A prospective assessment includes the exposures expected to occur in normal operation.	Estimating dose to the public from past operations
Existing	Future prolonged exposures (e.g. after remediation)	Past exposures (e.g. occupancy of contaminated lands)
Emergency	Emergency planning (operational intervention level)	Actual impacts after emergency