

Radiation Safety

Major Spills and Emergencies

Major spills and emergencies are those spills involving millicurie or greater activity, where airborne contamination occurs, or personal injury or fire are involved. These situations require additional assistance and these procedures should be followed:

1. During working hours, notify the Radiation Safety Officer (229-4275 or 229-6339) at once. During holidays, evenings, and weekends, call the UWM Police (9-911 from campus phones; 229-9911 from CGLS or UWM Field Station). Campus police will contact a member of the radiation safety staff. Consult emergency phone list for additional numbers.
2. Remove personnel from the area of the spill and hold them nearby until they can be checked for contamination by Radiation Safety Program staff.
3. If an individual is injured, apply immediate first aid as necessary. Do not let the possibility of radioactive contamination hinder first aid efforts. Decontamination of wounds, etc., can always be done after the victim's medical condition has been stabilized.
4. If the spill is liquid and the hands are protected, right the container by hand; otherwise, use tongs, a stick, or similar lever.
5. If the spill is on the skin, flush thoroughly with water and wash with soap or detergent.
6. If the spill is on clothing, remove the article at once and discard it in a plastic bag.
7. If the spill is airborne, evacuate the area at once. Switch off all ventilators and fans. Physical Plant should be contacted: 229-4742 during business hours or 229-4652 after hours.
8. Vacate and seal the room and go to a safe area, avoiding additional contamination of personnel. As practical, take precautions to limit the spread of contamination to other areas.
9. Shield the source spill if possible but only if it can be accomplished without further contamination or without significantly increasing your radiation exposure.
10. Take immediate steps to decontaminate personnel involved.
11. Decontaminate the area following a pre-established plan. The RSO or another member of the radiation safety staff will direct the decontamination procedure.
12. Monitor all personnel involved in a spill and cleanup.
13. Submit a written report of the accident to Radiation Safety Officer. Include a complete history of the accident, as well as corrective measures taken, and signatures of all individuals involved.