

Fission: The splitting of a nucleus into at least two other nuclei that releases a large amount of energy.

Gamma Rays: Originate in the nucleus. Highly penetrating. Stopped by concrete or lead.

Half-Life: The time it takes any substance to decay by half of its original amount.

Hot Spot: Any place where the level of radioactive contamination is considerably greater than the area around it.

Ingestion: The act of swallowing.

Inhalation: The act of breathing.

Ion: An atom that has fewer or more electrons than it has protons, causing it to be electrically charged and therefore chemically reactive.

Lethal Dose: Exposure of about 400 rem received over a short period of time. Expected to cause death within 30 days to 50% of those exposed who do not get treatment.

Nucleus: The part of the atom that contains protons and neutrons.

Photons: A discrete "package" of energy with no mass. Travels at the speed of light. Gamma Rays and X-rays are examples.

Proton: Small atomic particle that possesses a positive electrical charge.

Radioactive Decay: The spontaneous disintegration of the nucleus of an atom due to an uneven number of protons and neutrons.

Radon: A naturally occurring radioactive gas found in soils, rocks and water. Largest source of exposure to people from naturally occurring radiation.

REM: Relates the absorbed dose in human tissue to the effective biological damage of the radiation exposure.