

Radioactivity in the environment report shows impact of radioactive discharges to be well within dose limits

The latest Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report (RIFE 25) has been published today (5 November) and shows that levels and concentrations of man-made radioactivity measured in the environment during 2019 were low and impact to those most exposed is well within international dose limits.

- Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report published for 25 years
- Total radiation dose to members of the public in Scotland significantly below annual dose limits
- Radioactive discharges account for 0.01% of average annual dose
- Exposure to man-made radioactivity in 2019 similar than 2018

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for radiological monitoring that is carried out in Scotland and has a duty to ensure that no member of the public receives a dose in excess of the statutory dose limit of one millisievert (1 mSv) per year from permitted discharges.

Monitoring shows that the highest dose for a member of the public in Scotland reported in RIFE was approximately 3% of the legal limit at 0.031 mSv. This compares to a UK average radiation exposure from all sources of 2.3mSv which is predominately due to natural background sources.

Radioactivity occurs naturally in the earth's crust and it can be found in the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. Exposure to man-made radioactivity includes medical procedures and treatments, and discharges from nuclear and non-nuclear establishments.

The RIFE programme monitors the environment and the diet of people who live or work near nuclear sites. The annual RIFE report is a joint publication between all six agencies across the UK responsible for ensuring that doses from authorised releases of radioactivity remain within strict international limits. It brings together all results from SEPA, the Environment Agency, Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Dr Paul Dale, Radioactive Substances Unit Manager at SEPA, said:

“Radioactivity in Food and the Environment has been an extremely important publication since its inception in 1995, giving the public oversight of monitoring and the impact of radioactive discharges on the public and the environment. The 25th RIFE Report again demonstrates that Scotland's public is adequately protected against man-made sources of radioactivity that could

impact on our food and the wider natural environment.

“The results demonstrate SEPA has a robust regulatory oversight and that the impact of discharges from industry remain low. The well-structured monitoring and assessment programme that RIFE illustrates is a strong backstop to a robust process of regulation across the UK, and SEPA plays a vital role in that as Scotland’s environment regulator.”

SEPA is currently working with researchers on this year’s radiological habit surveys, ensuring that our monitoring programme targets the relevant locations and foodstuffs at the right frequency.

[RIFE 25](#) is available on SEPA’s website.

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