

CHECKLIST #26**RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY****Immediate Precautions in the Case of a Terrorist Attack**

Radiation cannot be seen, smelled, felt, or tasted by humans. Therefore, if people are present at the scene of an explosion, they will not know whether radioactive materials were involved at the time of the explosion. However, following these simple steps can help reduce their injury from other chemicals that might have been present in the blast.

If people are not too severely injured by the initial blast, they should:

- Leave the immediate area on foot. Do not panic. Do not take public or private transportation such as buses, subways, or cars because if radioactive materials were involved, they may contaminate cars or the public transportation system.
- Go inside the nearest building. Staying inside will reduce people's exposure to any radioactive material that may be on dust at the scene.
- Remove their clothes as soon as possible, place them in a plastic bag, and seal it. Removing clothing will remove most of the contamination caused by external exposure to radioactive materials. Saving the contaminated clothing would allow testing for exposure without invasive sampling.
- Take a shower or wash themselves as best they can. Washing will reduce the amount of radioactive contamination on the body and will effectively reduce total exposure.
- Be on the lookout for information. Once emergency personnel can assess the scene and the damage, they will be able to tell people whether radiation was involved.

Note:

There are many questions regarding the likelihood of whether terrorists would use radioactive materials in attacks since radioactive materials are hard to handle and the impact to the public would not be as tangible or visible after an attack. Different methods can be used in a radiological terrorist attack. A weapon could include explosion as a mechanism to disperse radiation as in the case of a dirty bomb or it could be more passive and include exposing the public to radioactive sources from gauges used in industry or to radioactive waste.