Appendix B
Helpful Information for Readers

Radionuclide Nomenclature

Radionuclides are sometimes expressed with the one- or two-letter chemical symbol for the element. A radionuclide is an unstable, or radioactive, form of an element. A given element may have many different radionuclides. Each is designated by a superscript number to the left of the chemical symbol. This number is the atomic weight of the radionuclide, equal to the number of protons and neutrons in its nucleus. Radionuclides which may be used in this report are shown in the following table:

Symbol	Radionuclide	Symbol	Radionuclide
^{3}H	Tritium	^{131}I	Iodine-131
^{7}Be	Beryllium-7	^{134}Cs	Cesium-134
^{51}Cr	Chromium-51	^{137}Cs	Cesium-137
^{54}Mn	Manganese-54	^{144}Ce	Cerium-144
^{58}Co	Cobalt-58	^{181}Hf	Hafnium-181
^{60}Co	Cobalt-60	^{238}Pu	Plutonium-238
^{65}Zn	Zinc-65	$^{239/240}Pu$	Plutonium-239/240
^{90}Sr	Strontium-90	^{241}Am	Americium-241
^{95}Nb	Niobium-95		

Scientific Notation

Scientific notation is used to express numbers which are very small and very large. A very small number will be expressed with a negative exponent, e.g., 1.3×10^{-6}. To convert this number to the more commonly used form, the decimal point must be moved left by the number of places equal to the exponent (in this case, six). The number thus becomes 0.0000013.

For large numbers, those with a positive exponent, the decimal point is moved to the right by the number of places equal to the exponent. The number 1,000,000 (or one million) can be written as 1.0×10^{6}.

Unit Prefixes

Units for very small and very large numbers are commonly expressed with a prefix. One example is the prefix *kilo,* abbreviated k, which means 1,000 of a given unit. A kilometer is therefore equal to 1,000 meters. Prefixes that may be used in this report are:

Prefix	Abbreviation	Meaning
milli	m	1/1,000 ($=1 \times 10^{-3}$)
micro	µ	1/1,000,000 ($=1 \times 10^{-6}$)
pico	p	1/1,000,000,000,000 ($=1 \times 10^{-12}$)

Units of Radioactivity and Radiation Exposure and Dose

The basic unit of radioactivity used in this report is the curie, abbreviated Ci. The curie is defined as the amount of radioactivity equivalent to 37 billion nuclear transformations per second. Historically, this was based upon the radioactivity from one gram of the radionuclide Radium-226. For any other radionuclide, one curie is the amount of that radionuclide that decays at this same rate.

Radiation exposure is expressed in terms of the Roentgen (R), the amount of ionization produced by gamma radiation in air. Dose is given in units of "Roentgen equivalent man," or "rem," which takes into account the effect of radiation on tissues. For the types of environmental radiation generally encountered, the unit of Roentgen is approximately numerically equal to the unit of rem.

Units of Environmental Concentrations

Concentration of radioactivity in air and milk samples are expressed in units of microcuries per milliliter (µCi/ml). Concentrations in water samples are expressed as picocuries per liter (pCi/l); federal standards are expressed in these units. Radioactivity in foodstuffs are given in microcuries per gram (µCi/g), dry weight. Radioactivity in soil samples is expressed as picocuries per gram (pCi/g), dry weight. Annual human radiation exposure, measured by environmental dosimeters, is expressed in units of milliRoentgens (mR). This is sometimes expressed in terms of dose as millirem (mrem).

Uncertainty of Measurements

Due to many variables, there is always an uncertainty associated with the measurement of environmental contaminants. For radioactivity, the predominant source of uncertainty is due to the inherent statistical nature of radioactive decay events, particularly at the low activity levels encountered in environmental samples. The uncertainty of a measurement is denoted by following the result with a "±" (uncertainty) term. This report follows convention in reporting the uncertainty as a 95% confidence limit (or interval), designated in the tables as "±2s." That means there is approximately a 95% level of confidence that the real concentration in the sample lies somewhere between the measured (reported) concentration minus the uncertainty term and the measured (reported) concentration plus the uncertainty term.

Negative Numbers as Results

Environmental measurements are frequently conducted at levels where the contaminant, such as radioactivity, cannot be distinguished from natural background levels. In this case, the result will still be reported by the analytical laboratory, even though it is below the measurement system's approximate minimum detectable concentration, or is less than zero. Negative values occur when the measured result is less than a pre-established average background level for the particular system and procedure used. These values, rather than "not detectable" or "zero," are reported to better enable statistical analyses and to observe trends in the data.

Gross versus Specific Analyses

Many of the radiological analyses of environmental samples yield information only about the overall, or gross, amount of a particular type of radiation (e.g., gross beta), rather than identifying and quantifying specific radionuclides. For example, rather than performing an analysis for particular gamma-emitting radionuclides, called gamma spectroscopy, one can do a gross gamma or, more commonly, a gross beta analysis, since gamma-emitting radionuclides also emit beta particles. This type of analysis is an effective screening tool and is much quicker and less costly than specific radionuclide analyses.