

Precautions to limit damage caused by radiation during your refuge life and assistance activities in the disaster area

Friday, March 25, 2011

As for the Tohoku-Pacific Ocean Earthquake, largely different from previous disasters, you need to give your careful attention to the impact of the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster during your refuge life, recovery efforts and assistance activities for the disaster area. The media reports daily on circumstances of the nuclear accident, water pouring work and the connection to the outside power sources, etc and some gives the impression that major crisis was over. However, according to the official announcement by the government, it's still in middle of an unpredictable situation. (as of March 24)

“The nuclear power plant accident has not ended yet: it will take quite a lot of time to bring it to an end.” “It is highly possible that the effect of the accident extends a long term and broad areas.” “The human bodies can be affected in some situations.”

Please kindly bear these things in mind, and, prepare carefully to properly respond to changing situations with no panic.

1. Basic information on radioactive contamination

- (1) Understand the state of radioactive contamination

It is still under an unpredictable situation. The level of radiodensity can increase unpredictably even in distant places where are more than 30km away from the nuclear power plant due to the effect of the direction of the wind or the weather.

Although “The radiation impact forecast network system” called “SPEEDI” has not yet made public (as of March 24), when it comes to be released, please kindly access to its information a.s.a.p.. Particularly as for those who is visiting at the disaster area from now on, it is recommended to bring a radiation detector for each group or each operation base just in case.

You may also access to radiation monitoring data by MEXT, which is to be released after few hours or half a day.

<http://eq.sakura.ne.jp/> or <http://eq.wide.ad.jp/>

(2) Know about the weather and the direction of the wind.

Please kindly pay careful attention to the change of the weather and the direction of the wind during your reconstruction activities, assistance activities and living activities. If you are in a downwind region of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, please kindly be careful of your activity time. And if you have the radiation detector, please kindly pay full attention to the change of numerical data.

Particularly when rain is predicted in downwind regions, please kindly check the advice on clothes guided as below.

(3) Affections on babies, children and young people and their attentions

Children and young people are susceptible to the impacts of radioactive contamination such as the possible onset of thyroid cancer in their future amongst others.

However, the local children are working as volunteers supporting victims and it seems that there are a lot of young people like university students in the volunteer groups. Please kindly confirm these points and lead adults around them to understand (2) and (3) noted as above and instruct the younger people to follow.

2. Clothing to reduce damage caused by radiation

It will be warmer in April, but please kindly refrain from exposing your skin.

Even in the areas where little radiation is detected, it's highly possible that you inhale dust during the work in disaster areas. So, wet masks and towels are useful for this. Wearing hats and dust-proof glasses is recommended. The recommended clothing is listed to avoid radioactive substances adhering to your body as below.

Rain apparel (Raincoat)

(With the smooth surface material is desirable: it is easier to clean up radioactive

substances.) (Hooded one is preferable.)

Hats or other things which cover your head

(radioactive substances accumulates in your hair)

Masks and towels

(Cover your nose and mouth with a wet towel to avoid internal radiation exposure caused by inhaling or snuffing radioactive substances. It is very important to keep the mask being wet all the time because radioactive substances are very small, so carrying a little water in small spray bottle for medication, for example, is recommended.)

3. “What to bring”

for people who join assistance activities for the disaster area

Packing tape

(It is used when standing by inside the buildings to seal up windows and air vents)

Medical goods

(Carry bandaids just in case: radioactive substances can enter your body through a wound)

A map

A compass

(You need to move to the windward side to avoid exposure to radiation.)

A smartphone and a battery charger or rechargeable batteries, if possible.

“Kombu” (kelp) or “Tororokombu” (a kind of processed kelp)*

(for people under 40)

Radiation detector, Radiation alarm

(It is okay to prepare one for each operation base or each group)

*It is expected that saturating the thyroid gland with stable iodine may prevent the absorption of radioactive iodine. Since “Kombu” and “Tororokombu” contain a lot of iodine, it is recommended to take a little of those foods every day.

However those who naturally have some troubles with thyroid should be careful

about having such food.

(from “Radioactivity extinguishes Tokyo metropolitan: measures against earthquake disaster that nobody knows” by Sangokan, and others)

4. If you should be aware of being exposed to radiation outdoors

Alert the people around you and evacuate indoors immediately.

Until getting under shelter,

Please kindly cover your mouth and nose with a wet towel and a mask.

Please always cover your body with a hat, long-sleeved clothes, and gloves, with no exposure of your skin.

Since rain can contain radioactive substances, please kindly be careful not to get wet with rain.

If you get wet, please kindly take your clothes off and wipe your body with a wet towel, carefully wipe and comb your hair; take a shower if possible.

When you stay inside

Please kindly close the door and turn off the air conditioner and the extractor fan to keep out the air from outside, in which radioactive substances are circulating.

Please kindly seal the gap with packing tape.

In case you may have been exposed to radiation,

First, please kindly take your clothes off, and put them in a plastic bag, then discard it. Please wipe yourself with a wet cloth or take a shower as soon as possible. And, please immediately contact with medical institutions and administrative institutions.

References: Safety of food and living November1, 1999

Information from NPO's Chernobyl relief
operation in midland