

The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station Emergency Planning Zone

What is the Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) for the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS)?

The Emergency Planning Zone for SONGS is a radius of approximately 10 miles from the plant and includes the geographical boundaries of the cities of Dana Point, San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano. The EPZ also includes some unincorporated areas of Orange County and Camp Pendleton. The 10 mile Emergency Planning Zone for nuclear power plants is established by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

Potassium Iodide (KI)

What is potassium iodide?

Potassium iodide is a chemical compound that contains iodine, which is necessary for the normal functioning of the thyroid gland. It is known by its chemical symbol, KI. Potassium iodide is the iodine in iodized salt. Most people ingest it every day without being aware of it.

Potassium iodide is also manufactured in pill form to be used as a supplement to help prevent the thyroid gland from absorbing radioactive iodine that might be released during an emergency at a nuclear power plant. It is intended to protect against thyroid gland cancer caused by radioactive iodine.

Potassium iodide is a supplemental protective measure, secondary to evacuation or sheltering in place. Evacuation and sheltering in place remain the primary protective actions during a radiological emergency.

Orange County KI Distributon Background Information

- In 2003, the NRC made a supply of KI available to all states with Nuclear Power Plants. Twenty-two of the 34 eligible states accepted the supply. This included the State of California, which distributed KI by mail through a one-time program in 2003.
- In late 2009, a new supply of KI was made available to states by the NRC to replace the expiring supply.
- In Spring of 2010, residents, businesses and schools in the EPZ received by mail information about the upcoming Potassium Iodide distribution program. Potassium Iodide (KI) was made available, free of charge, to those who live or work within the EPZ. Approximately 20% of residents requested the free KI.

- KI is only distributed on a pre-emergency basis to the residents, schools and businesses within the 10-mile EPZ.
- A public information line has been established by the California Department of Public Health that is operating from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The number is (916) 341-3947.