

**Q1 What is RADSAFE?**

A1 RADSAFE is a scheme covering the nuclear industry to provide a fast response, expert advice and support to the emergency services in the event of an incident involving the transport of radioactive materials. RADSAFE covers England, Scotland and Wales. It provides advice to the emergency services to make the incident safe prior to the Consignor arriving.

**Q2 Can you briefly explain how it works?**

A2 The scheme involves a simple but fast notification system, the mobilisation of technical support and expert advice and, once the incident is under control, full clean-up and other remediation work at the scene by the consignment owner. RADSAFE will hand over to the Consignor who will undertake the recovery.

**Q3 What companies are involved in the scheme?**

A3 Current members/affiliates of RADSAFE are:

* Dounreay Site Restoration
* Eckert & Ziegler Environmental Services Ltd
* EDF Energy
* GE Healthcare Ltd
* Magnox Ltd
* Ministry of Defence
* Nuclear Waste Services - LLW Repository
* Rolls-Royce
* Science and Technology Facilities Council
* Sellafield Ltd
* TRADEBE Inutec
* UKAEA
* URENCO
* Westinghouse - Springfields

Together, they represent the majority of the British nuclear industry and other organisations in England, Scotland and Wales involved in the transport of radioactive materials.

**Q4 What kind of radioactive materials are transported and how often?**

A4 Excluding radioactive materials for military purposes, many hundreds of packages are transported by road within the UK annually for industrial, research and, particularly, medical uses for the benefit of patients. Typically, they include radioisotopes, radiography sources, materials used in the preparation and manufacture of civil nuclear fuel, and certain wastes from the nuclear and other industries. About a thousand packages are moved by rail each year and are almost entirely associated with the nuclear industry, including waste containers and nuclear fuel flasks.

**Q5 What about those organisations who transport radioactive materials but are not covered by the scheme?**

A5 Our members represent the majority of the British nuclear industry and other organisations involved in the transport of radioactive materials. We actively encourage other relevant organisations to become signatories to the agreement. The RADSAFE scheme is designed to complement existing national and international legal requirements placed on RADSAFE Members who move radioactive materials by road and rail, and which are strictly enforced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

**Q6 So, if there are already a lot of legal requirements why do we need RADSAFE?**

A6 Legal requirements are there to regulate the movement of radioactive materials. These ensure the transport vehicles and the packages meet the highest national and international safety standards, so reducing the likelihood of an incident happening in the first place. RADSAFE is about the sharing and implementations of a structured mutual support response to its members. When it was first set-up in 1999, RADSAFE subsumed a number of other related but now defunct emergency plans to reduce overlapping and improve response efficiency. They were NIREP, IFTFEP and SNIFTFEP.

**Q7 Why is the MoD part of RADSAFE when the transport of nuclear weapons is excluded from the scheme?**

A7 The transport of nuclear weapons and special nuclear material is undertaken using the MoD’s own emergency plan, since such materials are generally outside the remit of RADSAFE. However, for all other all other emergency arrangements the transports of radioactive materials by MoD are covered by RADSAFE

**Q8 Surely the risks to the public are too high to be moving radioactive materials on our national transport systems?**

A8 That is a common misconception. The UK transport of radioactive materials is carried out to the highest standards of safety, technical and operational excellence and we have one of the best records in the world. Not surprisingly, therefore, significant accidents or incidents with the potential to affect the public or emergency servicesare extremely rare. Surveys have shown that annual doses to the public from the transport of radioactive materials are extremely low, well below normal background radiation levels.

**Q9 How does the RADSAFE scheme operate in the event of a real incident?**

A9 At the heart of RADSAFE is a consistent and ‘joined-up’ response by all Members and Associates, together with the emergency services who, of course, would be at the front-line of any incident. Notification of that incident would come via a dedicated 24-hour Freefone number (0800 834 153) to the National Chemical Emergency Centre (NCEC) in Oxfordshire. Relevant details will be recorded, including a unique code number identifying the owner of the consignment. Initial generic radiological protection advice would then be given to the emergency services attending the incident. A RADSAFE Responder, mobilised from the nearest RADSAFE member site, would attend the scene to offer further support. In the meantime, the NCEC would contact the consignor of the package containing the radioactive materials who would implement the consignor’s specific emergency arrangements, including the provision of more detailed data and advice to the site technical adviser and respond to the incident and take over from the RADSAFE Responder.

**Q10 How can we be certain that in the event of a real emergency the public will be protected?**

A10 All RADSAFE members are required to demonstrate, from time to time, their preparedness to deploy the scheme quickly and efficiently coupled with a clear understanding of what their role is in the event of a real incident – no matter how low the probability. In addition to the regulatory requirements placed on the day-to-day operations of our member organisations, many are also required to carry out regular exercises using simulated accident scenarios which also involve the emergency services. A RADSAFE working group drawn from member organisations monitors and reviews the plan from time to time to ensure it is up-to-date and takes into account operational lessons and best practice.

**Q11 How often has it been necessary to implement the RADSAFE scheme since it came into operation?**

A11 Since RADSAFE came into effect in 1999, on average, less one incident a year has occurred involving the transport of radioactive materials by road or rail for its members.

**Q12 Who, ultimately, carries the blame for a transport incident involving radioactive materials?**

A12 The priority is to work quickly and efficiently to support the emergency services so any potential risk to the public can be minimised and the incident brought under control. Then, under the RADSAFE plan, the consignor of the radioactive materials would assume full responsibility, in particular for clean-up, other essential remediation work, consideration of financial liability etc.

**Q13 The consignment owner seems to get away with it lightly, only assuming full responsibility for the aftermath of an incident once it has been brought under control?**

A13 Absolutely not. RADSAFE is based on both a practical and pragmatic approach to ensure a speedy and efficient response to the initial stages of an incident when there may be little to go on. That is why a RADSAFE Responder is mobilised from the nearest RADSAFE member site to provide early radiological support and monitoring alongside the emergency services at the scene. Depending on where the incident takes place, the RADSAFE Responder could also be the consignment owner. If not, the RADSAFE Responder would expect to receive more detailed data and advice from the consignor until they assume full responsibility later.