

## **The Advisory Team for the Environment, Food and Health**

The Advisory Team for the Environment, Food and Health (or “Advisory Team”) is a federal interagency group of subject matter experts in radiological health and related matters. The mission of the Advisory Team is to provide protective action recommendations to decision makers at all levels following accidents or incidents that result in the release of radioactive material to the environment, from the early phase through the late phase. The Advisory Team provides coordinated advice and recommendations on the environment, food, water and both human and animal health. The Advisory Team is comprised of representatives from four agencies: EPA, USDA, CDC and FDA. Advisory Team members provide not only technical subject matter expertise, but also organizational knowledge of their respective agencies.

The Advisory Team utilizes data products from the Interagency Modeling and Atmospheric Assessment Center (IMAAC) and the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center (FRMAC) to make its recommendations. A major function of the Advisory Team is to interpret published guidance on radiation protection, known as Protective Action Guides or PAGs, in the context of the specific contamination or exposure scenario. These guidance documents include protective action guides from the EPA for the general public and emergency workers (known as “EPA 400”; currently under revision); guidance from the FDA on acceptable levels of contamination in food and animal feed; guidance from the FDA on the use of potassium iodide (KI) for the protection of the thyroid following releases of radioactive iodine, and; guidance from the Department of Homeland Security on long term recovery following incidents involving radiological dispersal devices (RDDs) or improvised nuclear devices (INDs).

The Advisory Team is specifically listed in the Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex to the National Response Framework as a key federal response asset. The Advisory Team is currently chaired by the FDA. According to current procedures, the Advisory Team may be activated by DHS, coordinating agencies, and State/Local Tribal governments by contacting the FDA Emergency Operations Center at 1-866-300-4374. The Advisory Team will likely also be activated by DOE upon activation of the FRMAC. The Advisory Team operates in two modes: by actively deploying subject matter experts to the incident site to integrate into the JFO and by maintaining a remote pool of experts at their respective headquarters, who serve as reach back resources for the field.

The Advisory Team’s customers may include the Incident Command/Unified Command, DHS, the Joint Field Office/Unified Coordination Group, the coordinating agency and/or State/Local/Tribal government officials, as needed. The Advisory Team expects to integrate into the incident command structure through the Planning Section, where it can provide technical advice to the IC/UC. The Advisory Team also maintains close liaison with the FRMAC due to their mutual interests in data collection, dose assessment and guidance development. The Advisory Team also expects to liaise with other organizations in the field and the National Capital Region as needed and as resources permit.