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Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring Systems (ERAMS)

The **Environmental Radiation Ambient Monitoring System (ERAMS)** was a national network of monitoring stations that regularly collected air, precipitation, drinking water, and milk samples for analysis of radioactivity. The ERAMS network, has been used to track environmental releases resulting from nuclear emergencies and to provide baseline data during routine conditions. Data generated from ERAMS provides the information base for making decisions necessary to ensure the protection of public health.

ERAMS was operated by EPA's National Air and Radiation Environmental Laboratory, located at Montgomery, Alabama. These stations regularly sampled the major pathways through which the U.S. population could be exposed to radiation: air and precipitation (69 stations); drinking water (77 stations); surface water (58 stations); and pasteurized milk (66 stations). For each of the major pathways the stations were strategically distributed across the United States. Virginia has participated in this program since its inception in 1973.

ERAMS had five specific objectives:

- To directly assess the population's intake of radioactive pollutants and fallout.
- To provide data for developing a set of dose computational models for specific sources; and developing a national dose computational model to aggregate all sources and determine total population dose.
- To monitor pathways for significant population exposure which includes routine and accidental releases of radioactivity from major sources.

- To provide data for indicating additional sampling needs or other actions required to ensure public health and environmental quality, in the event of a major release of radioactivity to the environment.
- To serve as a reference of data comparison for localized and limited monitoring programs, e.g., state and utility.

Data from ERAMS have been published quarterly in an EPA journal called *Environmental Radiation Data* since the program began in 1973. In addition, special reports on specific events, such as the Chernobyl accident or nuclear weapons testing by the Chinese, are prepared, published, and distributed.

Source: U.S. EPA. Office of Radiation Programs National Air and Radiation Environmental Laboratory. June 1990.

The EPA has since replaced ERAMS with RADNET. See web site <http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/erams/>

Monitoring points for Virginia are:

Virginia

Ashland

Drinking Water

Harrisonburg

Air Particulates, Near Real-Time Gamma

Lynchburg

Air Particulates, Precipitation, Drinking Water

Richmond

Air Particulates, Near Real-Time Gamma

Virginia Beach

Air Particulates, Near Real-Time Gamma

Norfolk

Milk

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