



Circular number	<b>41-2005</b>	Date issued	<b>6 September 2005</b>
This circular is	<b>For information</b>	No response required	
This circular is	<b>Not relevant to the National Framework</b>		
Status	<b>This Circular concerns access to information about certain radioactive materials.</b>		

# *Access to Information about Sealed Radioactive Sources & Mobile Radioactive Apparatus*

Issued by:

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Civil Resilience Directorate

Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

**Risk Assessment Officers / Emergency Planning Officers  
Appropriate officials**

Summary

Ministers have decided that information regarding some radiological materials which is currently contained in local authority environmental registers should be restricted. This Circular details the implications of this and how fire and rescue authorities will continue to receive this information, which they need for compiling area risk assessments.

For further information, contact:

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### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Local authorities keep environmental registers which contain information regarding environmental issues. These registers are accessible by the public.
- 1.2 In 2004, Ministers decided that information regarding some radiological materials should be removed from the registers on the grounds of national security, fearing that it could be misused if it got into the wrong hands. The information concerns the location and types of aggregations of sealed radioactive sources and mobile radioactive apparatus.
- 1.3 On 22 March 2005, a Ministerial Direction was signed by Elliot Morley on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, instructing the Environment Agency (EA) to restrict this sensitive information.
- 1.4 Local authorities are being officially notified by letter of this action. They are being requested to remove any such information received prior to the Ministerial Direction from their public registers. The attached letter to Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities and Chief Fire Officers in England explains in technical detail the reasons for this decision and its implications.

### 2.0 Implications for Fire and Rescue Authorities

- 2.1 One consequence of this Ministerial Direction is that the EA no longer forwards information about these particular radioactive materials to local authorities. Arrangements have been made, however, for FRAs to receive information that will enable them to continue to prepare risk assessments for their areas.
- 2.2 Fire and rescue authorities may receive requests from local authorities for information relating to these radioactive sources. If fire and rescue authorities are unable to provide this information, local authorities should approach their local EA office. This system will not change once Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 comes into force in November 2005, when a new regime covering co-operation and information-sharing between agencies responding to emergencies will come into effect.
- 2.3 Any requests from the public for this information should be considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the environmental equivalent of the Freedom of Information Act 2000). There is an exemption from disclosure on the grounds of national security, but this is subject to a public interest test. Once consideration is complete, the fire and rescue authority will need to reply to the person(s) requesting the information.
- 2.4 Further information is also available from the Environment Agency web site ([www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)), or telephone 08708 506 506.

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