



news release

Date May 1st, 1986.

No. 84

For release

CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR ACCIDENT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Honourable Jake Epp, announced today that, with regard to the Soviet nuclear accident, the latest information available to the Canadian Government, combined with the continuing uncertainty, warrants an update in precautionary measures that Canadians travelling overseas should consider. Measures are being suggested to Canadian Government employees working in an 800 kilometre (or 500 mile) radius of the accident site. Health and Welfare Canada considers it prudent that other Canadians, in deciding on travel in this area, take these precautions into careful consideration.

As pregnant women and children under sixteen are at an increased risk from radiation, the Canadian Government has authorized the evacuation to a non-affected area of the dependents of employees at the Embassy in Warsaw, Poland. We are now consulting with the Canadian Ambassadors in the Soviet Union and in Romania about the advisability of similar steps in the case of our posts in Moscow and Bucharest. With respect to Canadians resident in or considering travel to this area, we recommend that, as a precautionary measure, those in the higher risk category -- pregnant women and children under sixteen years -- consider making arrangements to leave or to delay their travel plans. The local Canadian mission may be consulted for assistance should they decide to do so.

.../2

As a general precaution, Canadians within this area should seek to obtain a standard dose of iodine which can be obtained locally. Canadian Embassies may be consulted to determine how best to go about this. Although the risk of contamination through food is very low, Health and Welfare Canada does recommend that fresh milk from this area not be consumed at the present time. In addition, leafy vegetables and fruit should be washed thoroughly. There is little or no risk from processed foods since they would have been prepared before the accident.

Canadians are reminded that the Government continues to consider it advisable that persons in the vicinity of Kiev make arrangements to leave that area.

With regard to other European locations, the Government is not aware of any hazard that warrants any special measures.