

Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) frequently asked questions

My home or business is now in a Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) should I be concerned?

There is no need for concern. There is no change in the activities or the risk at either AWE site. The only thing that has changed is the scenario testing criteria, meaning a larger DEPZ area has been identified for AWE Burghfield. This means that you will be more informed about what to do if something does go wrong at AWE Burghfield and the plan which West Berkshire Council has developed, now includes your property.

What does this mean to me?

It means that in the very low likelihood of a radiation emergency happening and the radiation affecting areas outside the AWE site, you need to know what to do whether for yourself, your family, your home or your business.

How will we be informed if an incident occurs?

Currently you will be notified as a result of an automatic phone call to your landline in your home or businesses. There will also be media messages being sent out to alert you if you are not at home at the time. As a result of the changes in the DEPZ, this process is being reviewed.

What if my child is at a school within the zone?

All schools and children nurseries who were not previously in the DEPZ are being contacted to let them know what they need to plan for. We have detailed guidance to help these premises to plan and prepare for a radiation emergency, so they can make sure the children and staff are looked after until they can be safely removed from the area.

What if I have an elderly or vulnerable resident living within the zone?

In the unlikely event of a radiation emergency, the council and other partners will be identifying any vulnerable people in the early stages. Plans will then be actioned to support those people either in their own home or by safely evacuating them from the area.

Would we have to evacuate in the case of a radiation emergency?

Not necessarily. You would need to shelter inside a building whilst the situation is brought under control and no more radioactive material is being released. You will need to stay inside and tune in to local radio, TV channels, news websites, the AWE website and Twitter account @AWE_plc which will give further information and instructions, including updates on schools.

When the emergency responders have the situation under control, they will be monitoring in the areas affected to check to see if there is radiation in your area and if so how much. This can take some time so you may have to shelter for up to 48 hours. You will be advised whether it is safe to come out and go about your normal business or whether you have to be evacuated in a controlled and safe way to another location. In short, you should stay inside sheltering until you are told to do otherwise. You should not evacuate yourself without permission from the emergency responders since you may be making the situation worse for yourself and the responders.