

UNITED STATES  
 ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
 Washington 25, D.C.

No. 918  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 (Thursday, November 1, 1956)

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In response to inquiries, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission today issued the following statement:

The monitoring system sponsored by the U.S. Public Health Service under contract with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission was an auxiliary system established to provide readily available information to the public on levels of <sup>x</sup>radioactivity in the United States from the Spring, 1956 U.S. weapons tests. The Commission's principal monitoring network, which provides the basic data on levels of radioactivity resulting from weapons tests, is a separate system which operates continuously and around the clock.

The Public Health Service monitoring system was to operate approximately six months with April 15, 1956, and October 16, 1956 as the outside dates for its operation.

In July, 1956, after the U.S. weapons tests had ended, the two agencies agreed that the monitoring system would be terminated during the last week of September. The system was discontinued on September 27, in accordance with the agreement reached in July.

Fallout from the Spring, 1956 U.S. weapons tests had dropped to extremely low levels by September. Levels above the natural background noted during the month were due almost entirely to tests conducted by the

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U.S.S.R. Data on radioactivity from all tests, of course, are collected by the Commission's continuing world-wide monitoring network, with 26 U.S. stations and 62 in other countries.

The monitoring station sponsored by the Public Health Service in Albany, N.Y., made Geiger counter measurements of external and gamma radiation and also measured beta activity in the air by drawing air through a filter paper.

Little or no rise in external radiation was noted during the latter part of September by the Albany station. The highest air concentration was 11.7 microcuries (one millionth of one millionth of a curie) per cubic meter of air on September 22, about 15 times the normal background. The reading dropped to 9.1 on September 23, and to 3.26 on September 24. Readings taken ~~by~~ by the Commission's New York Health and Safety Laboratory in New York City <sup>from</sup> mid-September to mid-October ranged from less than 1 to 3.6 microcuries per cubic meter of air. ~~The Surgeon General,~~

*The* U.S. Public Health Service, and the AEC's Division of Biology and Medicine report that all of these readings—and all of the levels recorded by all other monitoring stations — are well below those which would be hazardous to health.

Statement from Public Health Service  
Was Dictated Nov. 1, 1956 (1:30 p.m.)

In response to inquiries the Public Health Service today issued the following statement:

Early in April the Public Health Service contracted with the Atomic Energy Commission to establish a network of radiation monitoring stations, in cooperation with State Health Departments. The network was to operate in conjunction with the 1956 series of AEC tests in the Pacific.

The primary purpose of the network was to give State and Local health departments more experience in studying radiation, and to obtain daily records of radioactivity. The network was to operate approximately six months, at the outside range between April 15 and October 16. All stations of the network were notified in April of these dates.

Shortly after the end of the tests, late in July, the (Public Health) Service and the AEC agreed that the last week in September would be a reasonable date to terminate the monitoring project. It was expected that any fallout attributable to the Pacific Tests would have occurred by that date. The network stations, including the one in Albany, New York, were advised during July and August for purposes of operational planning that they could expect the network to terminate at that time.

Although radioactivity levels in the air in some areas were somewhat higher during the latter part of September, they were still well below levels considered hazardous.

Certainly there was no hazard which required an unscheduled extension of the monitoring network. The project, including the termination, was carried out according to scientific plans developed prior to last April.

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The current controversy over radiation levels had no bearing whatsoever on termination of the monitoring operation. Radiation data is still being collected by other agencies on a widespread basis.

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