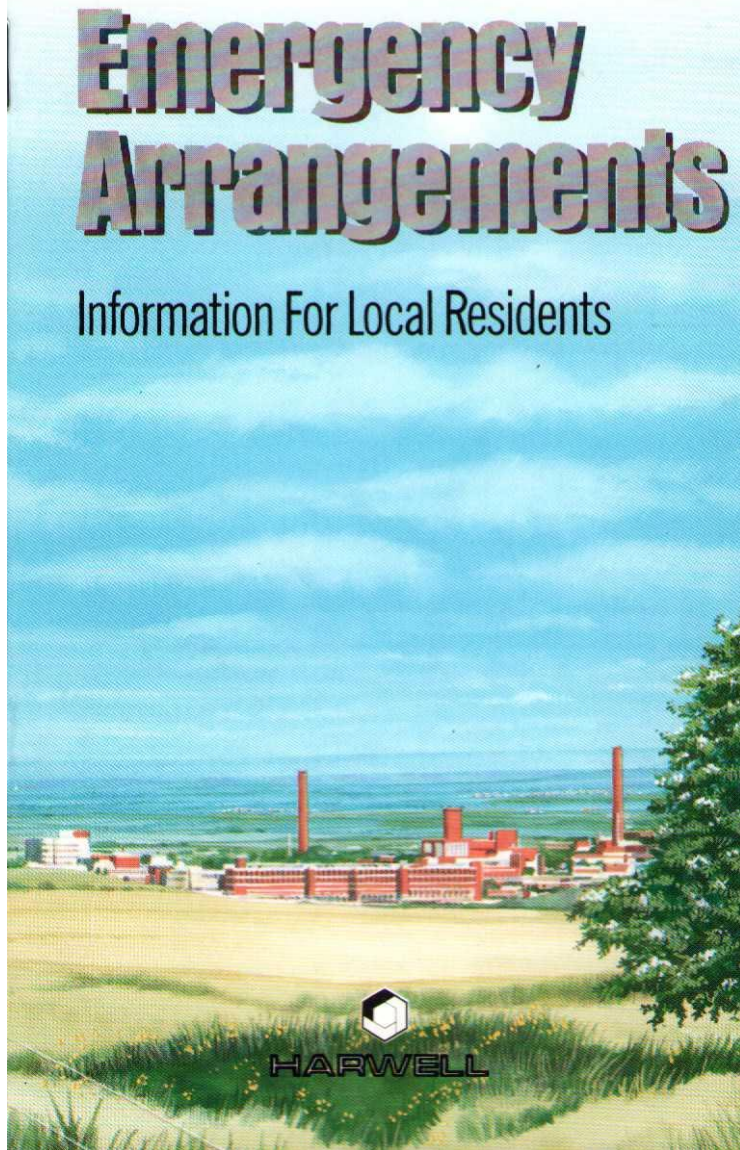


Harwell Laboratory

Emergency Arrangements

Information For Local Residents



HARWELL

Please keep this leaflet and the information cards issued with it in a safe place, where they can be quickly referred to if necessary.



This information leaflet is designed to inform those living near to the Harwell Laboratory what would happen in an emergency. By the word 'emergency' we mean an accident involving the release of radioactive or chemically-toxic material, such that it presented a health hazard to those living nearby.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the chances of such an accident occurring are very slight indeed. The design, construction and operation of the research reactors and other major plants are scrutinised by independent Advisory Safety Committees as well as by the UKAEA's Safety and Reliability Directorate at Culcheth and the Health and Safety Executive. Working practices are carefully regulated and all experiments are carried out under very strict supervision. As a result there have been no serious accidents at Harwell in over forty years of operation.

Nevertheless, every large industrial plant needs emergency plans of some sort, and it is obviously sensible for the Laboratory to have emergency arrangements, to ensure that the necessary organisation is there if it is ever needed.

Plans for dealing with emergencies have been in existence since the earliest days of the Laboratory in the 1940s, although only a summary version of these arrangements has been available to the public. Now, in response to greater public interest in matters of safety, the *Harwell Laboratory Emergency Handbook* has been published (January 1987) and you can consult this in your local library.



ROUTINE EMERGENCY EXERCISES

Harwell Laboratory uses loud sirens (Klaxons) as a warning device in the event of an emergency. The klaxons are tested on the first working Tuesday of January, April, July and October, at 10am or 2pm. The test consists of a single continuous note (the 'all clear'), followed by a repeated short note (the emergency warning), followed by the single continuous note again.

Klaxon notes:

Emergency – repeated short note

All clear – single continuous note

The Laboratory stages a major emergency exercise each year. This ensures that Laboratory staff know how to deal properly and safely with any emergency that may arise. These exercises may involve the sounding of the klaxons. The dates of these emergency exercises are published in advance in the Harwell Bulletin (which is available from the Laboratory's Public Relations department) but local residents receive a letter about them beforehand.

EMERGENCIES ON SITE

Staff on site would be alerted to an emergency by the sounding of the klaxons. However, you do not have to rely on hearing these to know that there is an emergency at the Laboratory. The Harwell Constabulary will tour the estates surrounding the Laboratory, broadcasting a message through a loud hailer and the Thames Valley Police will contact and inform anyone else living within the affected area that there is an emergency at Harwell.



Once alerted to an emergency (either by klaxons or by the Police), you are advised to follow this course of action:

■ **Go indoors.** Close all external doors and windows and switch off any fans. This will limit the amount of any contamination entering your home. Try to keep **pets** indoors with you, but if they are not around, don't look for them. Stay indoors and wait for them to turn up, then let them in and keep them inside.

■ **Please do NOT telephone the Laboratory** for information, as staff there will be very busy.

■ **Tune your radio** to one of the following stations, as any special information about the situation will be broadcast on them:

Radio Oxford

MW 1485 kHz (202m)
VHF/FM 95.2 MHz

Radio 210

MW 1431 kHz (210m)
VHF/FM 97/102.9 MHz

GW Radio

MW 1161/936 kHz (258/320m)
VHF/FM 96.3/96.4/97.4 MHz

If you cannot find any of these stations, don't worry; information will be provided on other BBC and commercial radio and TV stations as well.

A **Public Information Centre** will be set up to deal with any specific queries. The telephone numbers will be broadcast on local radio and television stations (see above paragraph for wavelengths).



WHAT IF...?

If you are working outside, please either make your way home if it is not too far away, or take shelter in a nearby house, and follow the above advice. All farm animals should be left where they are. You can take special action about their welfare later. (See also "Stock Feeding").

If you are alerted during school hours, please do NOT rush to fetch your children from school. The Police will make arrangements for the collection of children from any local schools affected by the emergency. Children will be re-united with their families as soon as possible; until then they will be safe in the care of their teachers at the Rest Centre (see also "Evacuation").

If the emergency turns out to be a false alarm, the 'All Clear' (single continuous note) will be sounded as soon as possible, and steps will be taken to inform all local residents.

EVACUATION

It should be emphasised that no action to evacuate should be taken by householders until advised by the police. If evacuation is necessary, it will probably be on a very small scale indeed. If it is necessary for your safety, you will be contacted by the Thames Valley Police. A **Check-List** of things you might like to take with you is provided at the end of this information leaflet and repeated on the **Information Cards** which accompany this leaflet. You would normally be asked to use your own transport, but of course transport would be provided by Local Authorities for anyone who needed it. You can take **household pets** with you if you wish.



If you do have to leave, remember to **make your house safe** before you go. Put out the fire, for instance, and switch off electric fires and cookers. Lock it up securely. Whilst you are away your property will, as far as possible, be under the protection of the Thames Valley Police. Access to the area will be restricted, so please check you have everything you need before you leave.

The Local Authority will set up a **Rest Centre** at the Civic Centre in Wantage (see map on back cover). This will act as a focal-point for information and support for anyone evacuated from their home. The Centre will also provide a place for school-children and any other family member(s) not present at the time of evacuation to be re-united with their families.

Local Authorities will provide **food and accommodation** at the Rest Centre for evacuated families, although of course if anyone prefers to stay with friends or relatives they are free to do so. **If you decide to stay elsewhere**, please tell either the police or the staff at the Rest Centre where you are going, so that they can account for everybody from the evacuated area. Please use the **Evacuation Registration Form** on the **Information Card** issued with this leaflet for that purpose.

Special arrangements will be made, if needed, by the Local Authorities and the District Health Authorities for the care of elderly, ill, disabled or handicapped people who have to be evacuated.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH

The Oxfordshire Health Authority hold stocks of special **Iodate Tablets**. These tablets provide protection to people who may have been exposed to radioactive iodine. You may have read about them in the press. They work, in effect, by 'filling up' the thyroid gland with ordinary iodine – the sort that is present in table salt – so that the gland has no room left to take up the radioactive variety. The tablets are very small and the easiest way to take them is with a drink of some sort. They are unlikely to produce any side-effects and will not interfere with other medications.

These tablets would only be issued to those in the affected area on the advice of the Community Physician (Medical Officer for Environmental Health) of the Oxfordshire Health Authority. They would be distributed by Authorised personnel carrying proof of identity.

It is possible that you may be advised not to eat locally-produced vegetables, fruits and milk for a few weeks after an emergency on site. This is extremely unlikely and you would certainly be given more information and advice if it was considered necessary.

STOCK FEEDING

If you need to go back into the evacuated area to feed or care for stock animals, horses or ponies, please contact the police, who will make the necessary arrangements.



SUMMARY

The Harwell Laboratory has operated safely for over 40 years. We intend this excellent safety record to continue. However, it is only prudent to develop procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency. This leaflet and the accompanying card are intended as short guides to these procedures. The details of the emergency procedures are in the **Emergency Handbook** which is in your local library.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this leaflet, please contact the Laboratory and ask for help from staff in the Public Relations Department (Tel: 0235 831887).

This leaflet has been produced in conjunction with Local Authorities, the Thames Valley Police and the Oxfordshire Health Authority.



QUICK REFERENCE CHECK LIST

In case of evacuation

What to take with you:

- a supply of warm clothing
- special food for babies and invalids
- medicines you are using
- personal documents
- any special valuables
- this leaflet

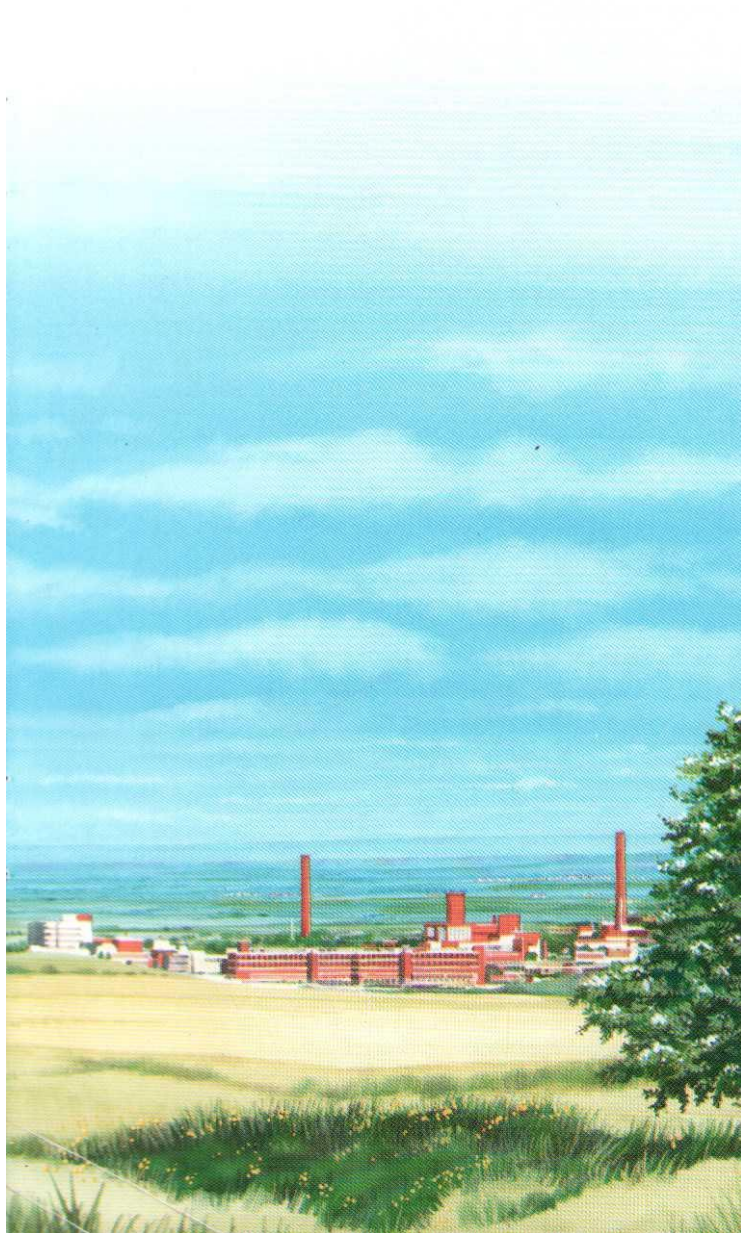
If advised that you may have to leave your home, collect these in convenient packages.

If you are taking your household pets with you, don't forget food and a basket for them.

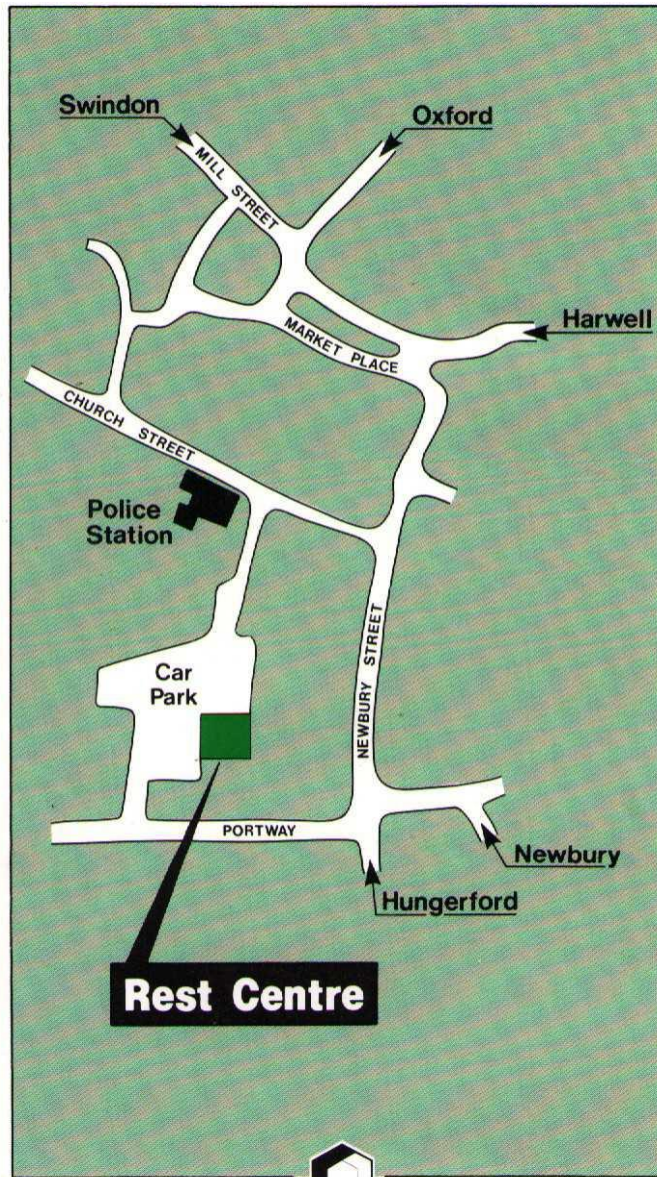
What to do before you leave:

- make sure fires are out
- switch off cookers and electrical appliances
- securely lock your property
- take your Evacuation Registration Form with you





Location of Rest Centre at Wantage Civic Centre



Harwell Design Studio 4137/88 Printed in England by CBE Printers Ltd



HARWELL
UK ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY