

SYSTEM OF REGIONAL CENTRES OF FIRST AID IN CASES OF RADIATION ACCIDENTS IN GERMANY

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When in the seventies the number of occupational radiation exposed persons in the Federal Republic of Germany increased from about 35,000 (1974) to about 160,000 (1978) the Industrial Injuries Insurance Institutes felt prompted to reflect about special measures to prevent radiation accidents and provide health care for this special cases. They did so without any actual occasion: accidents where persons have been exposed by ionizing radiation were in the seventies just as rare as today. But that fact does not allow the Industrial Injuries Insurance Institutes to neglect the existing potential for severe accidents.

So the Industrial Injuries Insurance Institute for the Electrical Industry including Precision Mechanics and the Industrial Injuries Insurance Institute for the Chemical Industry created the Institute for Radiation Protection in 1978. The primary task of that Institute is to guarantee an effective first aid in the case of a radiation accident.

To realize that task the Institute contracted 11 wellknown institutions like radiological departments of large hospitals or the medical departments of research centres where the knowledge on diagnostic and therapy of radiation effects is present. They are called „Regionale Strahlenschutzzentren“, Regional Centres for Radiation Protection (RCRP) (Fig. 1).

In the case of radiation accidents these RCRP are the logistical centres for all arising questions of treatment. They have facilities for reconstructing exposure situations and assessing and evaluating doses, including measurements of internal contamination, as well as for medical in-patient or out-patient treating like internal or external decontamination.

Another important task of the RCRP is to advise employers in all radiation protection questions which arise with the industrial application of ionizing radiation. Of course the centres give also answer to many question from members of the public, for example the personal effects of the power plant accident at Chernobyl.

The Institute for Radiation Protection offers regularly training courses and lectures to the staff of the RCRP. That is necessary because radiation accidents are seldom in the Federal Republic of Germany and therefore the staff can not keep practical experiences. For that reason the offered training courses impart practical training as well as theoretical foundations. Confronting the participants with hypothetical radiation accidents is basic part of the courses.

These training courses also provide the contact between the staff of the RCRP among each other and to a team of excellent experts on the field of radiation protection and radiation protection medicine. These experts can be contacted from the RCRP in the case of a radiation accident. Additionally the Institute invites representatives of the state authorities and of the

industrial branches where ionizing radiation is applied. In the last 13 years about 500 persons have taken part in the training courses.

Additionally to the training courses the Institute supports the RCRP by sending information about actual news in the fields of radiation protection and radiation protection medicine.

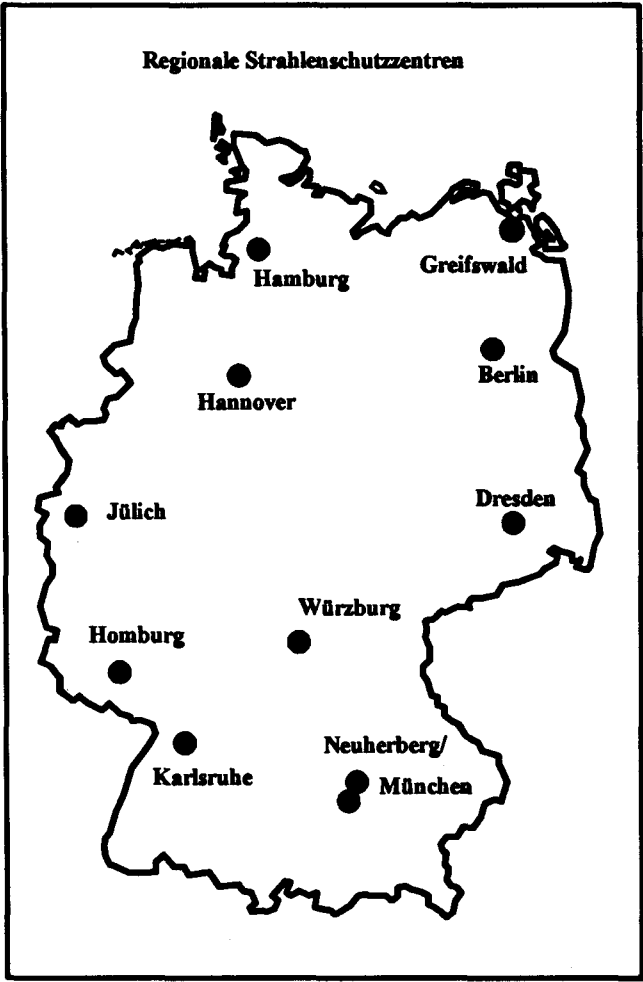


Figure 1. The Regional Centres for Radiation Protection in the Federal Republic of Germany.