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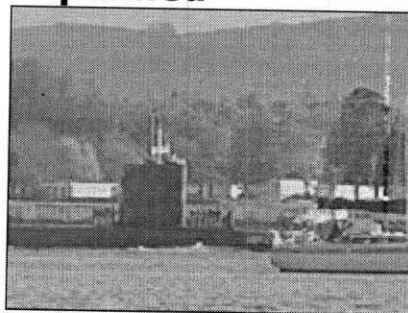
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Radiation pills move explained

Islanders on Skye have been briefed by officials over a move to issue locals with anti-radiation pills.



Emergency berths are located in the Highlands

The potassium iodate tablets are being given to people living near emergency nuclear submarine berths.

The tablets are intended to guard against radiation sickness in the case of a serious accident.

A public meeting in the town of Broadford was part of an information campaign organised by the MoD, the Highland Council and the health board.

About 2,000 people are to be issued with the pills as part of new regulations governing the response to a nuclear accident.

They will be provided to householders around Broadford Bay in Skye and Loch Ewe in Wester Ross by the end of January.

These are sites of so-called z-berths, designated emergency moorings for nuclear submarines.

Potassium iodate tablets can reduce damage to the thyroid gland if they are taken as soon as possible after exposure.

The Royal Navy's Captain Ian Lofthouse said: "To actually get to the point where these tablets would be absolutely necessary, the radiation would have had to escape from three separate barriers.



“ You're looking at numerous failures in one go, and really that is extremely unlikely ”

Captain Ian Lofthouse
Royal Navy

"You're looking at numerous failures in one go, and really that is extremely unlikely."

A spokesman for NHS Highland said the tablets were being distributed because they were more effective than the pills at

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Last year, the nuclear submarine HMS Trafalgar struck rocks off the coast of Skye, while on a training exercise.

Submarine 'risk'

The Scottish Green Party has asked whether the submarines should be allowed so close to shore, particularly if they are experiencing difficulties.

Highlands and Islands list MSP Eleanor Scott said: "The question is whether the submarines should be berthed near to a centre of population like this, putting this population at risk?"

"Also, will enough tablets be issued for the influx of population that happens during the tourist season?"

Residents living near the Dounreay nuclear submarine reactor test facility in Caithness are already issued with anti-radiation pills.

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