Marshall Islands Program

The Marshall Islands Program was established in 1954 by the Atomic Energy Commission, the predecessor agency to the DOE, following the accidental exposure of people in two atolls, Rongelap and Utrik, to fallout from the U.S. nuclear test at the Bikini atoll. The program has two components mandated by Congress: a special medical program that provides annual medical screenings to detect and treat cancer in the exposed population, and a radiological and environmental monitoring program to characterize the radioactive materials in the environment and in naturally occurring food plants in the four contaminated atolls of Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap and Utrik, in order to facilitate the resettlement of these atolls, two of which have already been resettled.

The Department of Energy is mandated by U.S. Public Law to provide medical surveillance and care, environmental monitoring and characterization, and dose assessment for the peoples of the Marshall Islands. Since 1956, the Department and its predecessor agencies have provided the latest and most up-to-date technologies, methodologies, and procedures to assist in treating possible radiation-related diseases that may arise in the DOE patient population of Rongelap and Utrik atolls. The Department also provides assistance to aid the four affected atolls of Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrik in their efforts to resettle these atolls.

In October 1995, the U.S. Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments issued its final report, which stated, in part, that the committee "found no evidence to support the claim that the exposures [to radioactive fallout] of the Marshallese, either initially or after resettlement, were motivated by research purposes." The report also noted that:

Many other documents describing U.S. government activities conducted on their [Marshallese] soil have been for too long shrouded in secrecy or made inaccessible to the Marshallese by bureaucratic obstacles. This inaccessibility of records, combined with a history of inadequate disclosure of hazards known to U.S. researchers, has contributed to a climate of distrust.

In an effort to dismantle the barriers that have contributed to this distrust observed by the Advisory Committee, the Department of Energy’s Office of Health Programs is actively promoting efforts to locate and make documents available on the medical care and radiological monitoring activities conducted in the Marshall Islands by its predecessor agencies.

The purpose of this web page is to provide a means for interested parties to
access electronic copies of historic documents on subjects that the Department of Energy, in consultation with the Marshallese government, deemed most useful to researchers.

**Special Marshall Islands' Edition/Health Physics Journal**

The status of DOE’s Marshall Islands activities, as well as perspective of other non-DOE authors is included in the special edition of the Health Physics Journal, Vol. 73, No. 1, July 1997 entitled "Consequences of Nuclear Testing in the Marshall Islands". The entire publication is available for browsing by clicking on the following [http://www.eh.doe.gov/health/marshall/marsh/journal](http://www.eh.doe.gov/health/marshall/marsh/journal). Each contributed paper is also retrievable as a separate document.

It is hoped that this site will be a useful resource for the people and the government of the Marshall Islands, for information regarding exposure to radioactive fallout and its effects on the environment and health as a consequence of the U.S. nuclear weapons testing program in the Marshall Islands from 1946 to 1958.