The Evacuation Zones Around the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant

Estimates of Possible Exposure Define U.S. Evacuation Zone

The American Embassy recommended on March 17 that Americans within 50 miles of the Fukushima reactors evacuate. The recommendation was based on an analysis by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that predicts possible radiation levels assuming conditions at the plant degrade. It is not based on current radiological conditions. It includes factors like whether containment vessels remain intact and weather patterns, among others. Here are the results of the analysis on March 16.

Japanese and American Evacuation Zones

About 2 million people live within 50 miles of the plant. This is a much larger than the area established by the Japanese, who have advised everyone within 19 miles to evacuate.

50-mile evacuation zone recommended by U.S. Embassy
2 million residents
12-19 mile evacuation zone, started March 25
62,000 residents
12-mile evacuation zone
77,000 residents

Recommended by Japanese government

Estimated population per square mile

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Source: Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Environmental Protection Agency; Robert Meck, health physicist, Science and Technology Systems; LandScan 2009 population dataset/UT-Battelle (population estimates)