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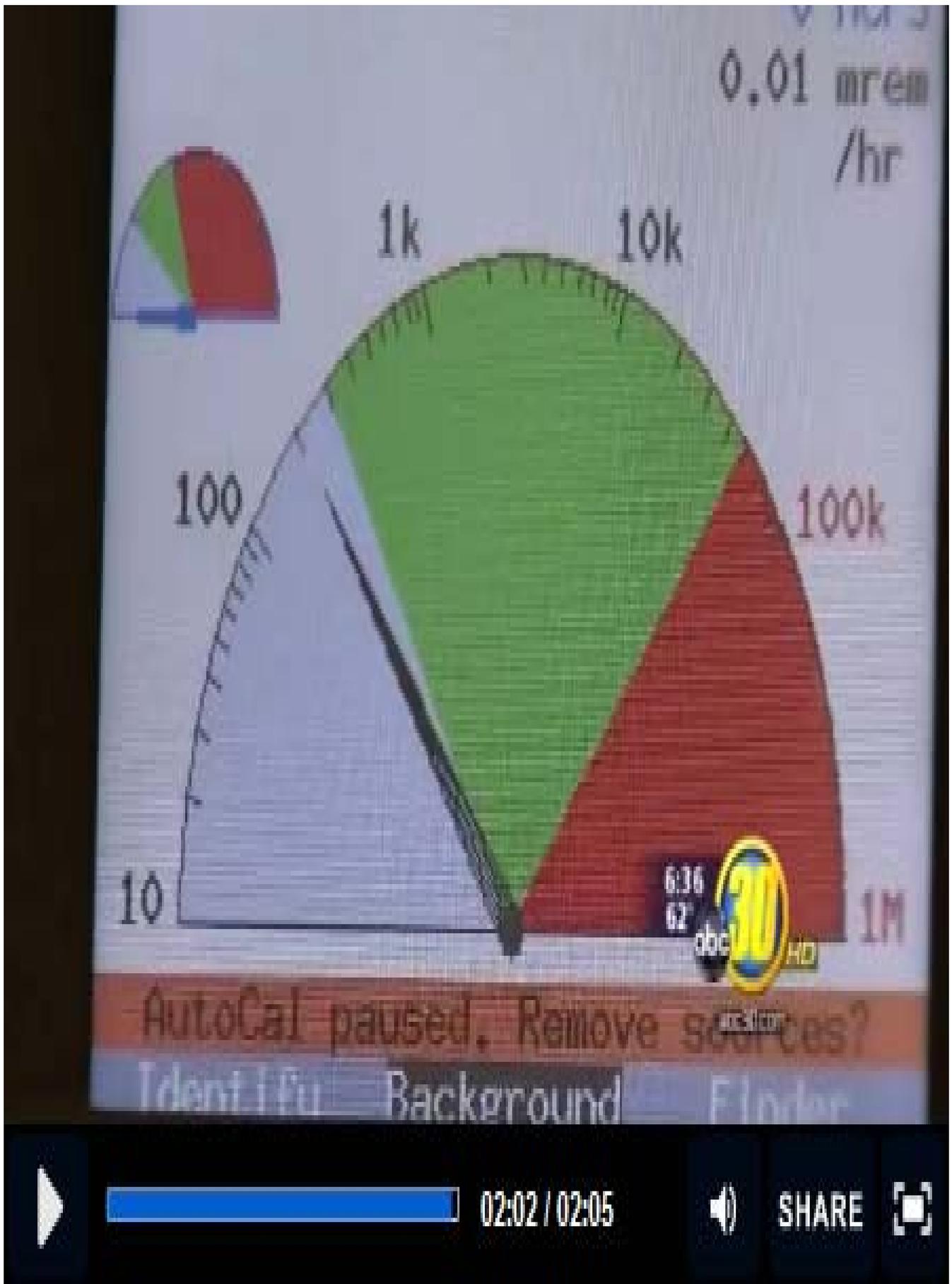
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Tracking radiation levels on the West Coast

Friday, March 18, 2011



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FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- There are already a dozen radiation monitors spread throughout California. One is in Fresno. These monitors filter the air and provide real-time data to the Environmental Protection Agency, and the results are available online. We asked radiation oncologist, Dr. William Podolsky if we should be worried.

"At this time, absolutely no." He said.

On Friday, The EPA detected minuscule amounts of radiation from Japan at a sensor in Sacramento. The levels are extremely low.

Podolsky says some particles are expected, but not at levels to cause concern. "You get some of these isotopes that decay very quickly and they never make it across the pacific, you get others that last longer a lot is probably going to wash out in the ocean and the amount that reaches the US is likely to be trivially small."

Radiation from Japan is not likely to register anything beyond the normal background range.

The Fresno Fire Department's Hazardous Materials team demonstrated their radiation detector and Geiger counter for us. Checking the air for normal background levels generates almost no reaction.

While the images from Japan are disturbing health professionals say at this point, Japanese radiation is not something we should worry about.

"Smokers are putting themselves at much more risk than someone who is a little bit of a distance from that power plant if Fukushima." Dr. Podolsky said.

The Fresno radiation monitor is part of the EPA's RadNet system. However, when Action News checked, the Fresno readings appeared to be wildly inaccurate. The site is said to be undergoing a "quality review."

The following Press Release was issued by the Governor's Office on Friday.

SACRAMENTO !! Governor Jerry Brown and the interim director of the California Department of Public Health, Dr. Howard Backer, today assured Californians that public health and safety do not face any threat from radiation released at nuclear facilities in Japan this week.

"As this very tragic situation in Japan unfolds, I want Californians to know that we are closely monitoring any potential impact on our state. I also want to emphasize that there is no threat to the people of California due to radiation in Japan," said Brown.

"The California Department of Public Health and our Emergency Management Agency are in constant contact with the federal agencies responsible for monitoring radiation levels in California, and we will tell the public if any precautions become necessary. However, there is no cause for alarm," Brown said.

"The Department of Public Health takes the situation in Japan seriously, and we are monitoring it very closely," said Interim Director of the California Department of Public Health Dr. Howard Backer. "As both President Obama and Governor Brown have stated, there is no threat to California, and so people should not be taking precautionary health measures."

"Potassium iodide is only appropriate for much higher levels of radiation that may be generated within close proximity to a nuclear source," Dr. Backer continued. "Using potassium iodide when inappropriate can result in significant side effects."

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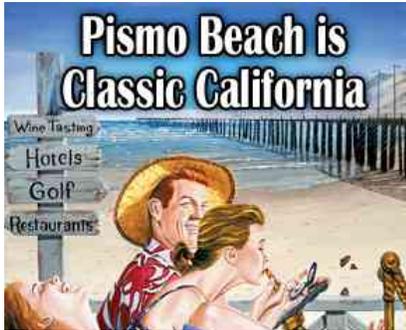
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