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## Some Radiation-Tracking Air Monitors May Not Be Working Properly, EPA Says

By Jim Snyder - Mar 21, 2011

[Eight of 18](#) air monitors in California, Oregon and Washington state that track radiation from Japan's nuclear reactors are "undergoing quality review," according to the Environmental Protection Agency's website.

A sufficient number of devices are working and can measure any changes in radiation levels from the damaged Fukushima Dai- Ichi reactors, said Ronald Fraass, director of the EPA's National Air and Radiation Environmental Laboratory in Montgomery, [Alabama](#).

"What we are seeing is not a problem," Fraass said today in a telephone interview.

The U.S. hasn't detected levels higher than what a person receives from exposure in the normal environment and the [Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#) has said it doesn't expect harmful levels of radiation to reach the U.S. from [Japan](#).

Monitors are listed as undergoing review if they report an abnormal reading, Fraass said. Scientists then evaluate the reason, Fraass said.

An abnormality might mean that the monitor isn't working correctly, or the device measured a spike in radiation levels attributable to an environmental change, Fraass said. For example, higher temperatures can cause higher levels of naturally occurring radon gas, he said.

The U.S. has 124 stationary air-radiation monitors compared with 50 in use when the reactor at Chernobyl, Ukraine, exploded in 1986, said Brendan Gilfillan, an EPA spokesman, in an e-mail.

Twenty-two monitors weren't working and were listed as out of service today, Fraass said.

"If a monitor in one area is being repaired, EPA's network will still be able to detect any fluctuation in background radiation levels," Gilfillan said.

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