

Scientists Drastically Underestimated Amount of Fukushima Radiation Worldwide

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Theme: [Environment](#)

We noted [2 days after the Japanese earthquake](#) that radiation from Fukushima could end up on the West Coast of North America. And [see this](#).

We started tracking the radioactive cesium released by Fukushima [within weeks](#) of the accident.

In fact, U.S. nuclear authorities were [extremely worried about west coast](#) getting hit by Fukushima radiation ... but publicly said it was safe.

We reported that Fukushima radiation [spread worldwide](#).

And we've documented for years that the failure to test the [potentially high levels](#) of radiation hitting North America [is a scandal](#).

Sadly, we were right to be worried ...

The Journal Environmental Science & Technology – published by the American Chemical Society – [reported](#) last year that airborne levels of radioactive cesium were raised by 100 to 1,000 times (what scientists describe as two to three “[orders of magnitude](#)”):

Before the FDNPP accident, average ^{137}Cs levels were typically of $1\ \mu\text{Bq m}^{-3}$ in Central Europe and lower average values ($<0.3\ \mu\text{Bq m}^{-3}$) were characteristic of northern, western and southern Europe.

During the passage of contaminated air masses from Fukushima, airborne ^{137}Cs levels were globally enhanced by 2 to 3 orders of magnitude.

Indeed, even [hot particles and nuclear core fragments](#) from Fukushima were found to have traveled all the way to Europe.

The French government radiation agency – IRSN – [released a video](#) of Fukushima cesium hitting the West Coast of North America. EneNews [displays](#) a screenshot from the IRSN video, and quantifies the extreme cesium spikes:

- Cesium-137 levels in 2010: $0.000001\ \text{mBq/m}^3$ of Cs-137 (blue writing)
- Cesium-137 levels in Mar. 2011: 1 to $10\ \text{mBq/m}^3$ in Western U.S. (orange plume)
- Cs-137 levels increased 1,000,000 – 10,000,000 times after Fukushima

Levels on the West Coast were up to [500 times higher](#) than estimated. Cesium levels from Fukushima were higher than expected worldwide, including in the [arctic region of Europe](#):

Radioactive cesium [bioaccumulates](#) in large fish and animals.

The radioactive half life of cesium 137 is usually [30 years](#). But scientists at the Savannah River National Laboratory say that the cesium at Chernobyl will persist in the environment between 5 and 10 times longer – [between 180 and 320 years](#).

And the Fukushima accident has pumped out some entirely new forms of radioactive materials ... in “[glassy spheres](#)”, [buckyballs](#), [ball-like spheres](#), and [bound to organic matter](#). Scientists don't really know how long these new forms will last ...

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