

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

March 16 - 22, 2023

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On March 20, 2023, the Provincial Public Health Office of Trat reported a situation of food poisoning caused by the consumption of horseshoe crabs. Two people have died and five others are currently receiving treatment for symptoms of nausea, vomiting, and muscle weakness, which are the initial symptoms after food poisoning. Cases should be promptly taken to the hospital. The Department of Health warned the public to be cautious when purchasing horseshoe crabs for consumption. Consumers must be careful to distinguish between the toxic and non-toxic types before buying and eating them. It is not recommended to eat horseshoe crabs because it may lead to death.
- From the Department of Disease Control's disease and health hazard Week 11 report (March 19-25, 2023), it was reported that from 2012 to 2021, there were 7,374 children who drowned and died, averaging 2 children per day. The age group with the highest mortality rate was infants to 4 years old followed by children aged 5-9 years old. There is an increased risk of injuries and drowning accidents during the summer vacation as children are out of school. Parents should closely monitor their children and emphasize not to swim in dangerous areas. If they do go swimming, they should wear safety gear such as life jackets or rubber rings for basic protection.

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT CESIUM-137

As presented in the case of the container of radioactive material (cesium-137) that disappeared from a power plant in Si Maha Phot District, Prachinburi Province, it was found that a metal smelting factory that buys second-hand metal scraps was in possession of material contaminated with cesium-137. The radiation level was measured around the factory and the environment, and it was found to be within the normal range. Cesium-137 is a radioactive material that is a soft, silver-white metal and can be easily shaped into a liquid at a temperature of 28 degrees Celsius. It is commonly used in various devices such as moisture meters, density meters, flow meters for fluids in pipes in factories, thickness gauges for various materials such as paper and metal sheets, radiation measuring instruments, and medical equipment used to treat cancer.

The severity of the symptoms from exposure to cesium-137 depends on the intensity, duration of exposure, and proximity to the source. Direct exposure to radiation can cause skin burns, blisters, and ulceration or tissue death. General symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and headaches. Exposure to cesium-137 radiation can affect the immune system and can cause hair loss. The Ministry of Public Health has assigned an emergency medical response team to care for patients with potential radiation exposure and to develop proactive health monitoring guidelines, and has notified provincial health offices nationwide to take action.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials should coordinate with other relevant agencies to announce to the public about the cesium-137 incident and provide basic information about radioactive substances. They should advise caution for people who work in industrial factories so that they know how to protect themselves. People who collect and resell metal items and scraps should notify the local village health volunteers to coordinate further inspection if they find any abnormal objects that cannot be categorized. These recommendations are for the safety of the community. People in nearby areas should monitor their symptoms and cooperate with health officials to provide information and verify links to incidents that may occur in the future.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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## Sources

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