



19 December 2006

The next HPA update statement will be issued on Thurs, Dec 28

Update on public health issues related to Polonium-210 investigation

The Health Protection Agency is continuing to provide expert advice on the public health issues surrounding the death of Mr. Alexander Litvinenko. Throughout, our primary concern has been to protect the public.

We have monitored many locations identified by the police to assess whether there is any public health risk. Our investigations have confirmed there is no public health concern in the open public areas. On the basis of the monitoring results received so far from we believe that the risk to the general public of having been exposed to Polonium-210 (Po-210) is likely to be very low.

As a precautionary measure we have also followed up a small number of staff and guests at some of affected areas of the locations. Some were asked to provide urine samples for testing and (apart from those noted below) **369** urine samples tested by the Agency have found nothing of concern.

Results received from a further two members of staff at the Millennium Hotel London Mayfair, and a member of staff at the Sheraton Hotel, Park Lane, London, show that they have been exposed to low levels of Po-210. These cases are related to areas which have been sealed off to the public as part of the police investigation. The levels are not significant enough to result in any illness in the short term and any increased risk in the long term is likely to be very small.

These staff members have had intakes lower than the adult family member of Mr Litvinenko for whom tests also identified they had been exposed to Po-210.

All the open public areas at these hotels have been assessed and on current knowledge there is no significant public health risk.

Test results update

- As of midnight, Monday December 18, NHS Direct had received a total of **3,806** calls since HPA advice was issued on Sat Nov 25;
- By 5pm Monday December 18, the HPA had followed up **649** people who, following assessment, needed further investigation.
- The total number of people so far referred as a precaution to a specialist outpatient assessment clinic for possible radiological exposure assessment is 29. Urine samples tested so far from **21** have found nothing of concern.

The police investigation continues. We will provide further public information as appropriate.

Notes to Editors:

1. There are now **10** samples which have shown exposure to low levels of Polonium-210 which are not significant enough to result in any illness in the short term and any increased risk in the long term is likely to be very small.
2. We advised that any member of the public in The Pine Bar on Oct 31 and Nov 2 (in addition to Nov 1) contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 who will pass on their details to the HPA for further assessment.

Our advice has also been that anyone who was in The Pine Bar on Nov 1, who has not yet contacted NHS Direct, is invited to do so.

3. The Agency is writing to offer further advice to those people who were in The Pine Bar on Nov 1 and who have already contacted NHS Direct. A special helpline, staffed by experienced HPA staff, has been set up. If requested by people in this group, a urine sample will be tested. Arrangements will be made for information to be provided to international guests.
4. Overseas visitors who were in the Pine Bar of the Millennium Hotel on Oct 31, Nov 1 and Nov 2 should email the Health Protection Agency for advice: overseasadvice@hpa.org.uk. If you do not have access to email you can contact NHS Direct on 00 (44) 845 4647 but only via a mobile telephone if you are calling from abroad. (If this does not connect you please try 0845 46 47 instead – again only from a mobile)
5. Further information is available on www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk and www.hpa.org.uk
6. For the latest information on locations go to the London Resilience Team website at www.londonprepared.gov.uk

7. Media enquiries to HPA London press office on 020 7759 2824 or 2834 or to HPA CRCE press office on 01235 822 678 or 01235 822 744. If you are calling out of hours please call 020 8200 4400.