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# Radiation Safety Counseling News

## Understanding Fears and Making Radiation Safety Decisions

Dear Reader,

Happy New Year! Some of you are receiving this newsletter for the first time because you have received training through Dade Moeller's Training Academy. If you do not want to receive future emails, please click on the "SafeUnsubscribe" link at the bottom of this message.



Ray Johnson

Before the holidays I conducted two education sessions at the Annual Meeting for the American Society of Nondestructive Testing. The topics were [Understanding the Basis for Radiation Fears](#) and [How We Make Decisions for Radiation Safety](#). Below is a synopsis of each with links to the session handouts.

As always, your questions or feedback are welcomed. Feel free to contact us through email, our blog, or our Facebook page.

Regards,  
[Ray Johnson](#)  
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Radiation Safety Counseling Services

### Quick Links

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We are on



We have created a Facebook page for the Radiation Safety Counseling Institute. This is another resource for the sharing of radiation safety related information and questions.

Click below to visit our page!

[Find us on Facebook](#)

### Got Questions?

If you have a question about radiation safety that you would like to share, please post your question on our Forum (blog) or our Facebook page. Each week our experts will select a question and post an answer that will also be included in our monthly newsletter.

To post a question go to:  
[Radiation Safety Forum](#)  
or  
[RSCI on Facebook](#)

## Understanding the Basis for Radiation Fears

- Do you work with radiation sources?
- Is your facility a safe place to work? How do you know?
- What does safe mean?
- How often do you actually evaluate radiation risks?
- Do you have all the facts for a fully informed, analytical, rational decision?
- How much does fear play a role in decisions for radiation safety?
- Is it OK to be afraid of radiation?

Psychologists tell us fears are a good thing for our safety. True fear is a response to a stimulus of imminent danger. Since radiation does not give us any warning sensation then decisions for radiation safety have to be based on imagination of unacceptable consequences. Risks of radiation injury are usually not imminent, but matters of future

random chance. Most fears of radiation are also based on mythology (common beliefs that are not technically true). Since no one has ever had an experience of radiation, then fears of radiation are not true fears, but manufactured fears based on images. Radiation phobias arise from questions of, "What if .....?" Radiation fears often arise from assumptions of cause and effect. The basis of radiation fears may be identified by the question, "What's so bad about that?" A defensible answer to "Is this safe?" requires answers to a series of questions from cause to effect.

To read the complete paper as well as view the slides from Ray's presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Nondestructive Testing, click the link below.

[Understanding the Basis for Radiation Fears \(pdf\)](#)

## How We Make Decisions for Radiation Safety

### ***Have you ever been puzzled about how people can make instant decisions for radiation safety with little or no actual data?***

Psychologists tell us we have two processes for making safety decisions. We have a slow conscious process for analysis of data and a superfast subconscious process. Our subconscious mind is constantly scanning all sensory inputs to anticipate dangers and take quick action for our safety. While some decisions for safety are determined by careful deliberation of our conscious minds, most safety decisions are spontaneous functions of our subconscious minds. Do we really want to take the time for careful analysis of a striking snake? We may also have to make safety decisions when we do not have all the data, time to get more data, or the ability to understand the data. This is not a problem for the subconscious mind which makes decisions based on stored memories and impressions. Unfortunately, these stored impressions may not be relevant to the actual risks or decisions for safety and they may lead us to make errors. Since subconscious decisions for safety are automatic and made out of our awareness, we also do not know how prone we are to errors in safety decisions.

To read the complete paper as well as view the slides from Ray's presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Nondestructive Testing, click the link below.

[How We Make Decisions for Radiation Safety \(pdf\)](#)

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## Communication Insights

Each week, we post another installment of guidance to improve communication with others. To stay informed, you can go to our [blog](#) and click on Follow: RSS, then choose to "Subscribe to this Feed".

You can also go to our [Facebook](#) page and choose "Like" to have our status updates displayed on your Facebook wall.

We hope you find this information helpful and welcome your comments, questions, or other feedback.