

James E. Martin

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# Physics for Radiation Protection

Third, Completely Updated Edition



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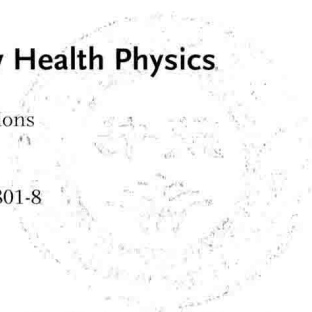
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*To the memory of*

*Frank A. and Virginia E. Martin  
and JoAnn Martin Burkhart.*



## Preface

This book is the outcome of teaching radiation physics to students beginning a course of study in radiation protection, or health physics. This 3rd edition attempts as the first two did to provide in one place a comprehensive treatise of the major physics concepts required of radiation protection professionals. Numerous real-world examples and practice problems are provided to demonstrate concepts and hone skills, and even though its limited uses are thoroughly developed and explained, some familiarity with calculus would be helpful in grasping some of the subjects.

The materials in this compendium can be used in a variety of ways, both for instruction and reference. The first two chapters describe the atom as an energy system, and as such they may be of most use for those with minimal science background. Chapter 3 addresses the special condition of radioactive transformation (or disintegration) of atoms with excess energy, regardless of how acquired. Chapters 4 and 5 describe activation and fission processes and the amount of energy gained or lost due to atom changes; these define many of the sources that are addressed in radiation protection. Chapter 6 develops natural sources of radiation and radioactive materials primarily as reference material; however, the sections on radioactive dating and radon could be used as supplemental, though specialized, material to Chapter 3.

The interaction of radiation with matter and the resulting deposition of energy is covered in Chapter 7 along with the corollary subjects of radiation exposure and dose. Radiation shielding, also related to interaction processes, is described in Chapter 8 for various source geometries. Chapters 9 and 10, on internal radiation dose and environmental dispersion of radioactive materials, are also fundamental for understanding how such materials produce radiation dose inside the body and how they become available for intakes by humans. These are followed by specialty chapters on nuclear criticality (Chapter 11); radiation detection and measurement (Chapter 12); applied statistics (Chapter 13); and finally (Chapter 14) neutron sources and interactions. A course in radiation physics would likely include the material in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 with selections from the other chapters, all or in part, to develop needed background and to address specialty areas of interest to instructor and student. In anticipation of such uses, attempts have been made



to provide comprehensive and current coverage of the material in each chapter and relevant data sets.

Health physics problems require resource data. To this end, decay schemes and associated radiation emissions are included for about 100 of the most common radionuclides encountered in radiation protection. These are developed in the detail needed for health physics uses and cross referenced to standard compendiums for straightforward use when these more in-depth listings need to be consulted. Resources are also provided on activation cross sections, fission yields, fission-product chains, photon absorption coefficients, nuclear masses, and abbreviated excerpts of the Chart of the Nuclides. These are current from the National Nuclear Data Center at Brookhaven National Laboratory; the Center and its staff are a national resource.

The units used in radiation protection have evolved over the hundred years or so that encompass the field. They continue to do so with a fairly recent, but not entirely accepted, emphasis on System Internationale (SI) Units while U.S. standards and regulations have continued to use conventional units. To the degree possible, this book uses fundamental quantities such as eV, transformations, time, distance, and the numbers of atoms or emitted particles and radiations to describe nuclear processes, primarily because they are basic to concepts being described but partially to avoid conflict between SI units and conventional ones. Both sets of units are defined as they apply to radiation protection, but in general the more fundamental parameters are used. For the specific units of radiation protection such as exposure, absorbed dose, dose equivalent, and activity, text material and examples are generally presented in conventional units because the field is very much an applied one; however, the respective SI unit is also included where feasible. By doing so, it is believed presentations are clearer and relevant to the current conditions, but it is recognized that this quandary is likely to continue.

This endeavor has been possible because of the many contributions of my research associates and students whose feedback shaped the teacher on the extent and depth of the physics materials necessary to function as a professional health physicist. I am particularly indebted to Chul Lee who began this process with me with skill and patience and to Rachael Nelson who provided invaluable help in capping off this 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. I hope it helps all who undertake study in this exciting field to appreciate how physics underpins it.

In an undertaking of this scope, it is inevitable that undetected mistakes creep in and remain despite the best efforts of preparers and editors; thus, reports (jemartin@umich.edu) of errors found would be appreciated.

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Associate Professor (emeritus) of  
Radiological Health  
The University of Michigan, 2012

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