

Iron-59

Handling Precautions

Physical Data

Principal Radiation Emissions⁽¹⁾

Maximum Beta Energies: 0.466 MeV (53.1%)
 0.273 MeV (45.2%)
 0.131 MeV (1.4%)

Gammas: 1.292 MeV (43.2%)
 1.099 MeV (56.5%)
 0.192 MeV (3.1%)
 0.143 MeV (1.0%)

Maximum Range of Beta in Air: 115 cm (45 in.)⁽²⁾

Unshielded Exposure Rate at 1 cm from a 1 mCi Point
Source: 6.18 R/h⁽³⁾

Unshielded Exposure Rate at 1 m from a 1 MBq Point

General Handling Precautions for Iron-59

1. Designate area for handling ^{59}Fe and clearly label all containers.
2. Store ^{59}Fe behind lead shields.
3. Wear extremity and whole body dosimeters while handling mCi (37 MBq) quantities.
4. Use shielding to minimize exposure while handling ^{59}Fe .
5. Do not work over open containers.
6. Use tools to indirectly handle unshielded sources and potentially contaminated vessels.
7. Practice routine operations to improve dexterity and speed before using ^{59}Fe .
8. Prohibit eating, drinking, smoking and mouth pipetting in room where ^{59}Fe is handled.
9. Use transfer pipets, spill trays and absorbent coverings to confine contamination.
10. Handle ^{59}Fe compounds that are potentially volatile or in powder form in ventilated enclosures.
11. Sample exhausted effluent and room air by continuously drawing a known volume through membrane filters.
12. Wear lab coat, wrist guards and gloves for secondary protection.
13. Maintain contamination and exposure control by regular monitoring and prompt decontaminating gloves and surfaces.
14. Use end-window Geiger-Mueller detector, NaI(Tl) detector or liquid scintillation counter to detect ^{59}Fe .
15. Submit periodic urine sample for bioassay from 4 to 24 hours after handling ^{59}Fe to indicate uptake by personnel.
16. Isolate waste in sealed, clearly labeled, shielded containers and hold for decay.
17. Establish surface contamination, air concentration and urinalysis action levels below regulator limits. Investigate and correct any conditions which may cause these levels to be exceeded.
18. On completing an operation, secure all ^{59}Fe ; remove and dispose of protective clothing and coverings; monitor and decontaminate self and surfaces; wash hands and monitor them again.

Near an unshielded ^{59}Fe source, dose rates from beta radiation can be much higher than dose rates due to gamma radiation. Avoid direct exposure by interposing transparent shields or indirect viewing. Avoid skin exposure by indirect handling and prompt removal of contaminated protective clothing. Urinalysis to determine uptake is only effective during the first 24 hours after handling ^{59}Fe . Whole body counting is the most sensitive method for determining ^{59}Fe body burdens(6). This and fecal analysis may be used to determine uptake for weeks or months after handling ^{59}Fe .

References