

PROTECTIVE GARMENTS

Shelter, ventilation, water, post-attack food supplies, and nuclear survival training are so urgently needed by all Americans, that we worry each time we point out some additional item which could be purchased. The private resources of a small number of informed and motivated Americans are the only source of civil defense protection for all Americans at the present time.

Yet there are numerous contingencies which are of interest to informed individuals. The book, *Nuclear War Survival Skills*, helps with many of these contingencies by providing expedient methods for dealing with them.

Protective clothing is one of these contingencies. Clothing is of little value in protection against initial nuclear explosion effects except for protection from flash burns. White or light-colored clothing provides valuable protection against thermal radiation which can burn unprotected skin. Clothing also has value for protection during the period of life-threatening fallout radiation which can last from a few days to a few weeks after a nuclear attack.

Clothing itself offers virtually no direct protection from gamma radiation. However, if fallout remains on the skin, short-range beta radiation can cause serious beta burns on the skin. If fallout is ingested with inhaled air, much of it remains in the lungs where it can cause beta burns and serve as a continuing source of gamma radiation. Even at low levels this can lead eventually to lung cancer. Moreover, if fallout is carried into a shelter on the clothing or skin of a contaminated person, it serves as a source of gamma radiation to the shelter occupants which diminishes the protection of the shelter.

These problems need not arise if you have a properly constructed and supplied fallout shelter. Just do not go outside until the fallout radiation is no longer life-threatening. There are, however, situations which could cause you to emerge early. You might need to get some essential item which was mistakenly not stored in the shelter, or you may need to rescue someone who has survived but needs help to get into the shelter.

In those circumstances you would want to fashion expedient protective clothing or to have available a commercial garment. We have not conducted a market survey of protective garments and do not have appropriate test facilities to evaluate them. However, we recently learned about one which appears to be a cost-effective product.

The RPA IIA Particulate Protective Garment produced by Redicorp Protective Materials, Inc., P.O. Box 462, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039 is currently available from the factory for \$59 in extra small, small, and medium and \$69 in large and extra large sizes. Their usual suggested retail price is \$99. Redicorp's telephone number is (703) 938-2928.