

Geiger-Mueller counter



After Fukushima, the subject of nuclear contamination had gained attractiveness for a short period of time. Geiger-Mueller counters were bought in huge quantities. However, I think only a small part of the people who bought these devices can also handle them correctly.

I had originally bought this gadget in 2005 for a tour to Kazakhstan. Reason was that – according to several reports – some nuclear contamination could still be present due to earlier atomic bomb tests by the Soviets (eg around Semipalatinsk and Zharkent). Lots of the roughly 500 nuclear test were conducted on the surface. In addition, some reports also mentioned potential nuclear waste of space capsules laying around (eg Baikonur). I was also curious about the readings on my trip to Murmansk (reports on nuclear contamination by the Russian North sea fleet) and Chernobyl.



On all my trips though, the Geiger-Mueller counter did not show any increased radioactivity. In the area of Murmansk and Chernobyl, I could understand it. Everything was done to contain contamination also because of the attention of the neighboring countries. Luckily though, my tour through Kaszakhstan was also no problem in this regard. The common transit lines seem therefore secure. However, I did not visit very remote places there.

The device itself measures Alpha-, Beta- and Gamma-radiation. The included manual explains their characteristics quite detailed and includes also some tips and commonly applied practices. It can be downloaded under <http://www.gamma-scout.com> and is interesting to read even if you don't own such a unit.

The device itself runs on a battery (should work for about 10 years according to the producer). A battery exchange becomes quite expensive though as the counter has to be sent in and newly calibrated by a specialist.