

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Clean-Up Efforts

How are you going to remove tritium from the groundwater?

We will start by pumping out about seven feet of water in a pond adjacent to the plant, or about half of the pond's depth at its deepest point. After that happens, the groundwater adjacent to the pond, which has tritium in it, will begin to flow toward the pond. As that happens, we will continue pumping water from the pond to keep it at the lowered level.

How long will this last?

The process is expected to last 12 months or longer.

What will you do with the water that you are pumping out of the pond?

We will send this water to the blowdown pipe, where it will be mixed with water from the cooling lake and sent to the Kankakee River, where the low levels of tritium are discharged under strict federal guidelines.

Is this the same blowdown pipe that leaked?

Yes, this is the same pipe that we used earlier and which leaked in the past. When the tritium issue came to light in November 2005, we stopped putting any tritium into the pipe, saying we would not reintroduce tritium until we could be sure of the pipe's integrity. Since that time, working with the proper agencies, we have done numerous tests to be sure the pipe works correctly. We hired outside experts to fully inspect the pipe and make sure it has no breaks or leaks. Moreover, we have added a number of controls to be sure the system works correctly, such as a monitoring system that will immediately alert operators if there is any leakage into the vacuum breaker vaults. We have worked very closely with the Illinois Attorney General's Office on this plan.

Most importantly, we will make sure that the concentration of tritium placed into the pipe is very low, at undetectable levels. The highest concentration will be 200 picocuries per liter. By way of comparison, the safe drinking water standard established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is 20,000 picocuries per liter.