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Limerick Generating Station Safely Storing Used Nuclear Fuel Fact Sheet

- Limerick Generating Station safely stores used nuclear fuel on site in a spent fuel pool and in dry cask storage.

What is dry cask storage?

- Dry cask storage is an additional way to safely store used nuclear fuel. Older used fuel assemblies, carefully selected from Limerick's used fuel pool, are placed in airtight, seal welded, dry shielded canisters (DSC) that completely encapsulate the fuel.
- The dry shielded canisters are transported to an on-site concrete storage pad in a thick steel cask that is tightly sealed. The dry shielded canisters are then safely stored in concrete vaults, called horizontal storage modules (HSM), on the concrete pad. The used fuel is cooled by air circulating through their storage vaults.
- The storage vault walls are approximately three feet thick and are designed to withstand natural or man-made events.

Limerick's dry cask storage

- The dry cask storage vaults are located well within Limerick's protected area and are subject to the same extensive and rigorous security procedures as the rest of Limerick's facilities.
- In summer 2008 Limerick loaded and stored two dry shielded canisters into the horizontal storage modules and an additional five in both 2009 and 2010.
- Each canister holds 61 fuel bundles and each horizontal storage module holds one canister. Limerick's pad currently has 24 horizontal storage modules and 12 are filled.
- The pad was constructed to accommodate 94 storage modules. Additional storage modules will be added once the current modules are filled. This is enough space to store Limerick's used fuel through the end of the operating licenses for Limerick Unit 1 and Unit 2 and beyond.
- An additional pad may be built, or the current pad extended, to accommodate additional used fuel if Limerick enters a period of extended operation after going through the license renewal process and a national repository is not opened.



A national repository for used nuclear fuel

- Limerick Generating Station will store its used fuel at a national used fuel storage facility once one is put into use.
- The U.S. government has a legal obligation to manage used reactor fuel. A blue-ribbon commission is evaluating the best options for a safe, long-term solution to managing used nuclear fuel.

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Background on a national repository for used fuel

- In 1987 congress adopted an amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that directed the Department of Energy (DOE) to study Yucca Mountain as the site for a potential national repository for used fuel.
- In 1994, the DOE started building a system of tunnels at the site and began scientific and technical analyses. The DOE published the results in a comprehensive evaluation of the site that demonstrated Yucca Mountain is capable of protecting public health and safety.
- Based on this comprehensive evaluation, in 2002, Congress and President George W. Bush approved Yucca Mountain, Nev., as the site of a national repository for used nuclear fuel.
- In 2009, President Barack Obama announced a budget that did not allocate enough money to the Yucca Mountain project to enable the DOE to continue studying the site as a potential national repository for used fuel. Alternatives to the Yucca Mountain site will be evaluated by the DOE..