

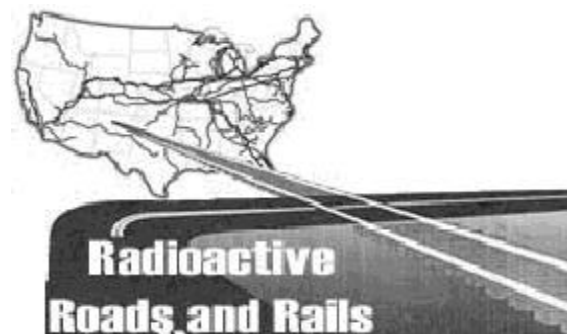


For more information, contact:

Public Citizen's Critical Mass
Energy and Environment Program
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Washington, DC 20003
www.citizen.org/cmep
202-546-4996
202-547-7392 (fax)







OR

Nuclear Information
Resource Service
1424 16th Street, NW, Ste 404
Washington, DC 20036
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Are Your EMERGENCY RESPONDERS Prepared for a Nuclear Waste Accident?



-  Yucca Mountain is the only site being considered by the Department of Energy (DOE) as a "permanent disposal" site for the United States' highly radioactive nuclear waste. This spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste is currently located at 77 sites across the country and would have to be transported by truck or rail to Yucca Mountain if that site is approved as a nuclear dump.
-  Nuclear waste would have to travel through 43 states, past the homes of 50 million Americans for 25 years.
-  A person standing one yard away from an unshielded, 10 year old fuel assembly, would receive a lethal dose of radiation (500 rem) in less than three minutes. A thirty-second exposure (100 rem) at the same distance, would significantly increase the risk of cancer or genetic damage.
-  Over time transportation will likely become safer with improvements in technology. In 30-50 years there may be acceptable reasons to transport this waste. At the same time, waiting allows for the natural decay of radioactive elements to lower the radiation and thermal heat content of the waste and inherently make future transportation safer.
-  A study done by the Department of Energy as part of the 1986 Environmental Assessment for the Yucca Mountain repository site, warns that a scenario involving a high speed impact, long duration fire, and fuel oxidation in a rural area would contaminate a 42 square mile area, require 462 days to clean up, and cost \$620 million. A similar accident in an urban setting would be even worse!
-  Data from the Department of Transportation reveals that in the last 10 years, just under 100,000 accidents released some form of hazardous materials in the U.S. and its territories. These releases caused over \$300 million in damages, over 4000 minor injuries, over 350 major injuries, and over a staggering 100 deaths.



Who Is in Charge?

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations cover highway shipments of spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste, including packaging, labeling, marking, and shipping papers. DOT regulations stipulate which routes can be chosen for these dangerous shipments. States and Tribes can select alternate routes, as long as they comply with DOT guidelines.



Check out the Atomic Atlas!

For more details about where the waste might travel and to print out a map of your community showing the schools, colleges, and hospitals along the routes, visit the Atomic Atlas on the World Wide Web.

Go to www.citizen.org/cmep and click on the Atomic Atlas icon.

Are My Emergency Responders Prepared?

If a nuclear waste transportation accident occurs, local, state, and tribal fire and police organizations would be the first to respond. If these “first responders” are not adequately trained or do not have the proper equipment to deal with nuclear materials, the results could be fatal. First responders should have access to radiation detection and protection equipment, as well as decontamination equipment, at the very least. Further, accidents involving release of radioactivity could require hospitals with isolation rooms, local supplies of potassium iodide, and an emergency management plan that includes checking potentially exposed individuals for radiation and treating any cases appropriately.

In order to be ready for a potential accident, first responders’ training should include practice exercises where they run through a simulation of an accident and rehearse all the steps necessary for dealing with vehicles, casks, equipment, and victims.



Emergency Personnel dressing for a practice exercise

What Can I Do?

- ✉ Write to your Members of Congress and tell them that you do not want high level nuclear waste to travel through your community. You can use the sample post card text below, or write one in your own words. Send your note on a post card depicting a local scene if you can.
- ✉ Host a letter-writing party and have your friends and family write letters or postcards, too.
- ✉ Also, if you belong to a group yourself, put an article in the newsletter, or make an announcement at a meeting.
- ✉ If you are a teacher, have your students make posters or design their own postcards to send to your Representatives.
- ✉ Contact us (see back of flyer) for more flyers or other materials.


Dear Rep./Senator _____

I do not want high level nuclear waste travelling through my hometown!

The risks of nuclear waste transportation are high, and I am worried that my local emergency responders are not prepared to deal with a nuclear waste accident.

Please OPPOSE any legislation that would put nuclear waste on our roads and rails.

Sincerely,
Your Name and Complete Address



Representative X
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

OR

Senator Y
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Is There Any Help Available?

Back up emergency support is available from the Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE’s Radiological Assistance Program (RAP) is the DOE’s answer to a potential radiological emergency from a nuclear waste transportation accident. The DOE has 8 RAP centers in Brookhaven, CT; Savannah River, GA; Oak Ridge, TN; Chicago, IL; Albuquerque, NM; San Francisco, CA; Richland, WA; and Idaho Falls, ID. DOE’s goal is to have a RAP team on the accident scene within 4 to 6 hours after local authorities request help. Unfortunately, a lot can happen in four hours when nuclear materials are involved.



DOE workers check for radiation.