High-Level Radioactive Waste Encyclopedia Article

High-Level Radioactive Waste

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High-Level Radioactive Waste

High-level **radioactive waste** consists primarily of the byproducts of nuclear **power plants** and defense activities. Such wastes are highly radioactive and often decay very slowly. They may release dangerous levels of radiation for hundreds or thousands of years. Most high-level radioactive wastes have to be handled by remote control by workers who are protected by heavy shielding. They present, therefore, a serious health and environmental hazard. No entirely satisfactory method for disposing of high-level wastes has as yet been devised. Currently, the best approach seems to involve immobilizing the wastes in a glass-like material and then burying them deep underground.

See Also

Low-Level Radioactive Waste; Radioactive Decay; Radioactive Pollution; Radioactive Waste Management; Radioactivity