



Q: *Does the DOE plan to monitor the repository after its closure?*

A: The repository is designed such that it could be kept open for up to 100 years without precluding the capability of keeping it open for up to 300 years. Keeping the repository open means that the underground storage areas can be directly inspected and the waste packages readily retrieved, were that necessary. Thorough performance confirmation testing and monitoring will be performed during this operational period. In addition, the DOE must design and implement a postclosure monitoring program that complies with Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations at 10 CFR Part 63. Before the DOE could close the repository, it would have to submit to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission an application to amend the license to permit the closure. The application would include, among other things, a description of the postclosure monitoring program.

The application also would describe the DOE's proposal for continued monitoring to prevent any activity that would pose an unreasonable risk of breaching the repository's engineered barriers, or that would increase the exposure to the public beyond the limits imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In its application to close the repository, the DOE would define the details of this program. These requirements for a license amendment for closure, combined with the additional experience and knowledge gained during the intervening years, would allow the DOE to take full advantage of any new information, insights, or technologies that had developed since the start of repository operations.

Yes. Federal law requires the DOE to monitor the repository both before and after closure. Monitoring after closure of the repository will last for an indefinite period of time.