

Q: *Would a repository at Yucca Mountain protect public health and safety?*

A: The Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have established stringent standards that protect the health and safety of individuals working and living in the vicinity of Yucca Mountain. The results of repository performance analyses indicate that a repository at Yucca Mountain would likely protect the health and safety of the public, for at least 10,000 years in the future.

Before it will grant a license to construct or operate a repository, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will require assurance that the repository would be safe for current and future generations. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency and Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards that apply after closure of the repository would preserve the quality of the environment by establishing strict protection requirements for the groundwater.

The DOE has evaluated the safety of workers and the public for the time that the repository would be operating. The DOE also has conducted a safety evaluation for the period after the closure of the repository. Considering the results of these safety evaluations, the Secretary believes that a repository at Yucca Mountain will perform in a manner that protects public health and safety.

The average American receives an annual dose of about 360 millirem from both natural and man-made sources (cosmic radiation, radon, food, medical and dental procedures, etc.). Even after 10,000 years, the potential exposure to the public from a repository at Yucca Mountain is estimated to be less than 1 percent (less than 1/10 of a millirem) of the dose limit allowed by federal regulation. The potential dose from the repository is so small that when combined with the area's natural and other man-made sources it would be indistinguishable from the doses in other nearby communities.

As required by law, any repository would be monitored even after closure. This monitoring would provide additional assurances that the health and safety of future generations will be preserved.



Any repository for high-level waste and spent fuel must meet the stringent standards of the Environmental Protection Agency, be licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and ultimately be subject to continuing congressional oversight. The Secretary believes a repository at Yucca Mountain would meet these rigorous tests.