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UK | Japan: Tepco to build sarcophagus over Fukushima reactor

Posted on June 16, 2011 by [fukushimanewsresearch](#)

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[UK | TELEGRAPH | Thursday 16 June 2011](#)

The operator of the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear plant has announced plans to construct a shroud over one of the reactor buildings, a stop-gap measure until a more permanent solution can be found, such as entombing the facility in concrete.

A similar concrete sarcophagus was built over the remains of the reactors at the Chernobyl power plant after that facility was destroyed in an accident in April 1986.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. will start the construction of a rigid steel frame over the No. 1 reactor on June 27, Yoshikazu Nagai, a spokesman for the company, said.

A hydrogen explosion destroyed the walls and roof of the reactor building on March 12, the day after the cooling system was knocked out by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the tsunami that it triggered.

The frame, which is being put together off-site, will support polyester fibre panels that have been coated with a resin designed to prevent further radiation leaking into the atmosphere.

The entire structure will be put together by remotely controlled cranes and other vehicles in order to minimise the amount of radiation the company's emergency repair crews are exposed to, Mr Nagai said.

The cover will stand 177 feet high and be 154 long with a roof that can be opened to give cranes access to the interior. It will also be fitted with filters that will gradually scrub the air inside the building of radioactivity, enabling workers to enter the plant.

Tepco will use the operation to test the construction methods and effectiveness of the shroud but plans to build similar covers over the No. 3 and No. 4 reactor buildings, which were also damaged by explosions after the tsunami.

Eventually, Tepco plans to erect a concrete structure around the reactors, although it admits that will take several years to achieve.

Company officials admit they are not sure how effective the temporary cover may be in limiting emissions of radiation from the reactors and spent fuel pools, but it will at least prevent more rainwater entering the buildings and becoming contaminated with radiation, they said.

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