

The Best News for Your iPhone® — Just Got Even Better. DOWNLOAD IT NOW Available on the App Store The New York Times

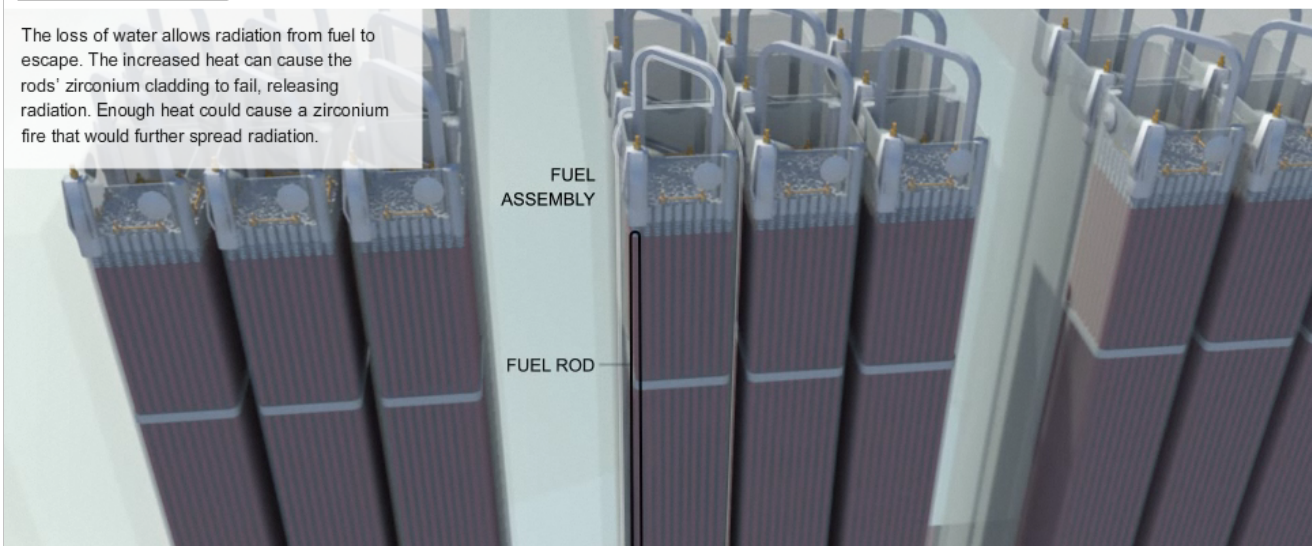
UPDATED March 18, 2011

Hazards of Storing Spent Fuel

Dangerous conditions can occur if water drains from pools storing radioactive fuel rods.

1 2 3 4 5 6 NEXT

The loss of water allows radiation from fuel to escape. The increased heat can cause the rods' zirconium cladding to fail, releasing radiation. Enough heat could cause a zirconium fire that would further spread radiation.



By XAQUÍN G.V., BILL MARSH, DYLAN McCLAIN and GRAHAM ROBERTS | Send Feedback

Sources: Nuclear Energy Institute; David A. Lochbaum, Union of Concerned Scientists; Margaret Harding, 4 Factor Consulting; Arnold Gundersen, Fairewinds Associates; International Atomic Energy Agency

RECOMMEND

TWITTER

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

SHARE

Related Multimedia

View More Multimedia »

Related Links



Photographs

The Aftermath in Japan

Japan reeled after an earthquake and a tsunami struck in deadly tandem.



Photographs

Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan: Readers' Photos

NYTimes.com asked readers to send photographs from areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami. Here is a selection of images.



Interactive Feature

Satellite Photos of Japan, Before and After the Quake and Tsunami

Compare satellite images of areas of Japan before and after the disaster.

Complete Coverage: Earthquake in Japan

Certainties of Modern Life Upended in Japan

INTERACTIVE FEATURE: How Shifting Plates Caused the Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan

INTERACTIVE FEATURE: A Closer Look at the Damage From the Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan