

Burial Ground Trench 94

Operating Unit #18

- Holds the defueled submarine and cruiser reactor compartments from our nation's nuclear Navy.
- Capacity: 1.5 million cubic meters.
- Waste has lead and residual solid PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). The lead (about 100 tons per compartment) can be disposed without treatment because it's encapsulated in thick metal casing.

Where did the waste come from?

The reactor compartments come from our nation's nuclear Navy. (The reactor fuel goes to Idaho.) In the 1980s, a Navy environmental study led to the compartments coming here. An EIS in the 1990s led to more reactor compartments coming to Hanford.

The compartments come from the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, where workers drain piping systems, tanks, vessels, and other components; seal the radioactive systems; remove the reactor compartment; and seal it in steel package. Compartments arrive via barge from Puget Sound, through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, down the Washington coast, and up the Columbia River to Hanford. Currently, one or two come each year. More than 117 of them are disposed at Hanford today.

What will happen to the waste?

The 'management' of waste here is disposal. The waste will remain at Hanford. Reactor compartments are expected to keep their integrity for more than 600 years.

What's the risk?

The major risk is transporting the reactor compartments to the trench — from Bremerton, in Puget Sound, the ocean, and the Columbia River. Hazards include possible capsizing, which could disturb the riverbed or shore, disrupt navigation, and injure workers.



Left: Trench 94, 2010, courtesy U.S. Navy



Sub reactor compartment coming ashore in Richland, October 2011

