Permanent Retrievable Storage Encyclopedia Article

Permanent Retrievable Storage

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Permanent Retrievable Storage

Permanent retrievable storage is a method for handling highly toxic hazardous wastes on a long-term basis. At one time, it was widely believed that the best way of dealing with such wastes was to seal them in containers and either bury them underground or dump them into the oceans. However, these containers tended to leak, releasing these highly dangerous materials into the **environment**.

The current method is to store such wastes in a quasipermanent manner in salt domes, rock caverns, or secure buildings. This is done in the expectation that scientists will eventually find effective and efficient methods for converting these wastes into less hazardous states, in which they can then be disposed of by conventional means. One chemical for which permanent retrievable storage has been used so far is the group of compounds known as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)s.

Permanent retrievable storage has its disadvantages. Hazardous wastes so stored must be continuously guarded and monitored in order to detect breaks in containers or leakage into the surrounding environment. In comparison with other disposal methods now available for highly toxic materials, however, permanent retrievable storage is still the preferred alternative means of disposal.

See Also

Hazardous Waste Site Remediation; Hazardous Waste Siting; Nimby; Toxic Use Reduction Legislation

Resources

Books

Makhijani, A. *High-Level Dollars, Low-Level Sense: A Critique of Present Policy for the Management of Long-Lived Radioactive Wastes and Discussion of an Alternative Approach.* New York: Apex Press, 1992.

Schumacher, A. *A Guide to Hazardous Materials Management.* New York: Quorum Books, 1988.

Periodicals

Flynn, J., et al. "Time to Rethink Nuclear Waste Storage." *Issues in Science and Technology* 8 (Summer 1992): 42–46.

Kliewer, G. "The 10,000-Year Warning." *The Futurist* 26 (September-October 1992): 17–19.