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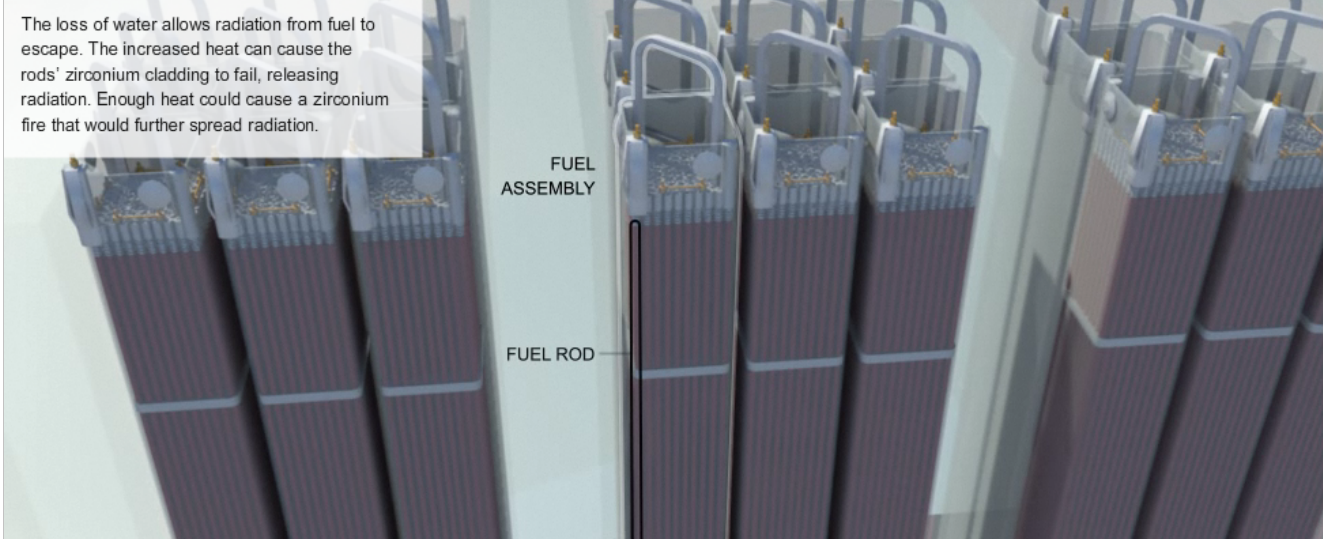
UPDATED March 18, 2011

Hazards of Storing Spent Fuel

Dangerous conditions 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 and GRAHAM ROBERTS | [Send Feedback](#)

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

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

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