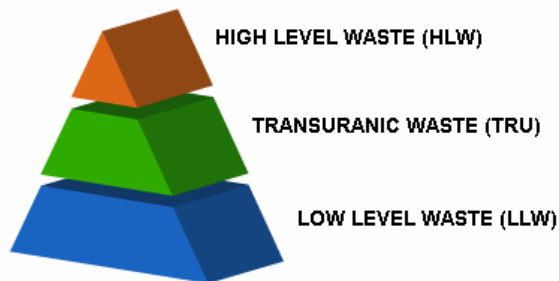


## Interactive: Nuclear Reactor Wastes



### Nuclear Reactor Wastes



**LOW LEVEL WASTE (LLW)** Low level waste makes up about 90 percent of all radioactive waste. It includes ordinary objects like clothing or wipes that come into contact with some source of radiation. It can also include the hand tools and piping used in a nuclear reactor. It is not harmful to handle and can be safely disposed of in a landfill.

**TRANSURANIC WASTE (TRU)** Transuranic waste includes the waste created during the reprocessing (recycling) of spent fuel. However, the U.S. does not reprocess its spent nuclear fuel, so the commercial nuclear industry does not produce any of this waste in the U.S. Some military operations, however, do produce this kind of waste, mostly from the production of weapons. This kind of waste is buried deep in the ground to avoid exposing humans to transuranic waste.

**HIGH LEVEL WASTE (HLW)** High level waste is very radioactive. It is made up of spent fuel rods. Long-term exposure to HLW is harmful to humans and can cause cancer. It requires special shielding when handled and transported. It also needs to be cooled because its radiation means that it puts out a lot of heat. A large nuclear reactor can produce 25 – 30 tons of this waste every year. This kind of waste is also buried deep in the ground for human and environmental safety.