



Refueling Columbia Generating Station

Refueling a nuclear power plant is a carefully planned and highly regulated process that ensures the continued safe and reliable operation of the reactor. Columbia Generating Station's 27th refueling outage (R-27) begins April 11, 2025, and is scheduled for 56 days. More than 2,000 skilled workers, hired locally and from across the country, will join Energy Northwest's workforce of about 1,000 employees to support refueling and maintenance projects. The work conducted during the refueling outage ensures high levels of equipment reliability is maintained.

Workers will replace 256 of 764 nuclear fuel assemblies in Columbia's core with new fuel. Fuel that has been in the reactor core for six years will be placed in the used fuel pool, which removes residual heat from the assemblies. After a minimum of five years in the pool, the assemblies are moved to Columbia's on-site dry cask storage, where they are stored securely in above-ground, 185-ton, concrete and steel, dry-storage casks. There are currently 54 casks on site, containing most of Columbia's 40 years of used fuel. The rest of the used fuel is currently stored in a used fuel pool, awaiting transfer to dry-storage.



Columbia Generating Station is refueled every two years to ensure safe, efficient and reliable operation.

Refueling outages also provide the opportunity to perform required preventative maintenance and work that can only be accomplished when the reactor is offline. Projects include: Adjustable speed drive replacement, a reactor recirculating pump and motor replacement, residual heat removal valve repair, circulating water pumphouse basin repair and 230kv transmission line upgrades.

About Energy Northwest

Energy Northwest is a Washington state public power joint operating agency and a premier provider of carbon-free electricity. Energy Northwest comprises 29 public power member utilities, serving more than 1.5 million customers, and provides its members and regional customers with safe, reliable, cost-effective, responsible power generation and innovative energy and business solutions. The agency owns and operates hydroelectric, solar, battery storage, wind and the Northwest's only nuclear power facility. Energy Northwest also explores transportation electrification and new generation projects to the benefit of public power.