

Rebooting of Canadian medical isotope reactor delayed

August 13 2009

A Canadian reactor that produced one-third of the world's supply of medical isotopes before it closed in May for repairs will remain offline at least until early 2010, nuclear authorities said Thursday.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) had previously estimated the stoppage would last only a few months, but a new analysis confirmed "nine sites likely requiring repair" at the Chalk River facility, 185 kilometers (115 miles) northwest of Ottawa.

High resolution scans also identified both "wall thinning and localized pitting that suggests different corrosion effects," which require further investigation, AECL said in a statement.

"Further guidance on a return to service date will be provided when more data is available," it said.

The half-century old National Research Universal reactor in Chalk River, Ontario was shut down on May 15 after a leak of radioactive water inside the reactor.

[Medical isotopes](#) produced by the reactor are used to diagnose cancer and heart patients around the world. The shutdown has led to a global shortage of the precious radioactive material.

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Citation: Rebooting of Canadian medical isotope reactor delayed (2009, August 13) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

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