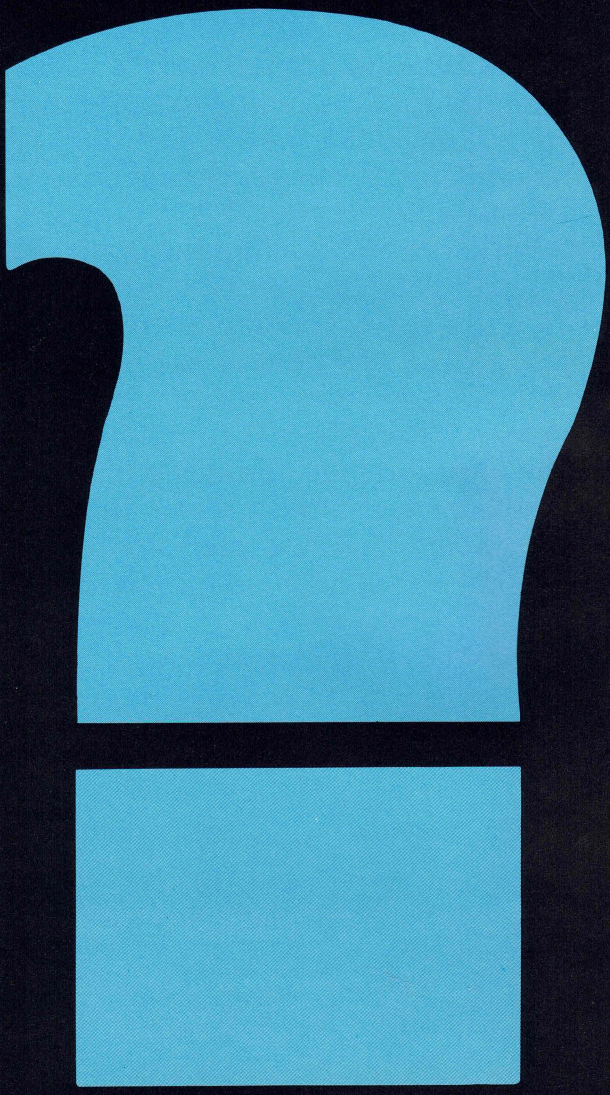
Is plutonium dangerous?



It's less dangerous than many things we live with. Plutonium has been handled safely for decades.

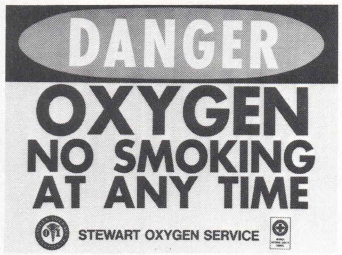
Any danger – or safety – is relative. Fire, water, coal, wind, sun, oxygen, in fact, most things are both safe and dangerous. And plutonium is no exception.

Because we understand plutonium, we can handle it safely. And it's easier to handle safely than some of the toxic liquids, gases, and mechanical devices we accept as a normal part of our lives.

Workers handle plutonium with gloves in sealed boxes. The radiation it emits doesn't penetrate their skin, and particles can be washed off readily if any contamination occurs.

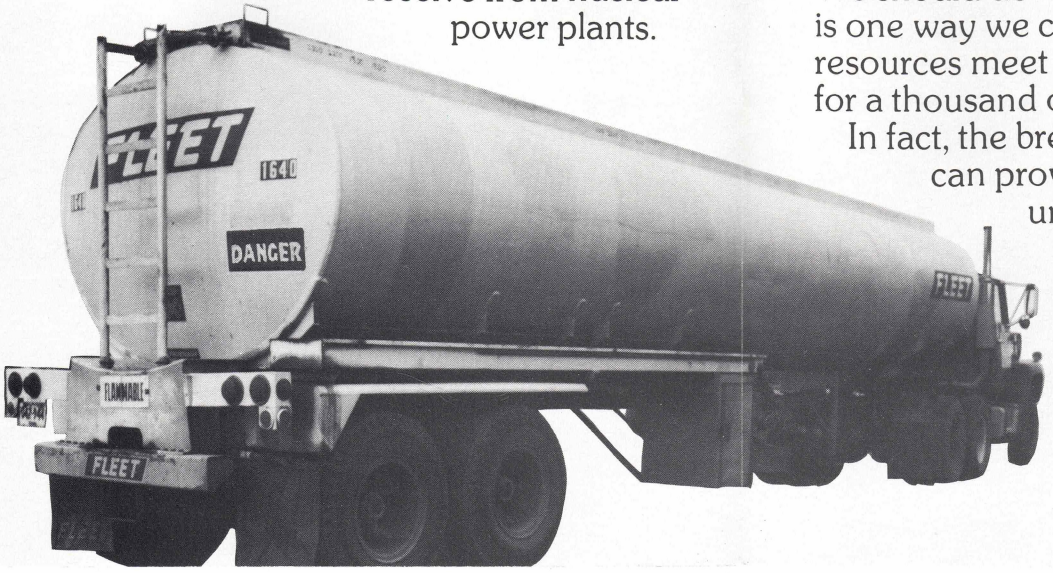
During World War II, thirty workers were exposed to levels of plutonium that were much, much higher than the public would ever receive from nuclear power plants. Since then, all have been medically monitored on a regular basis. Not a single worker has developed adverse effects due to plutonium.

All of us carry small amounts of plutonium in our bodies from the five tons or so that was dispersed in the earth's atmosphere by weapons testing. Yet there has been no indication that it has caused us any ill effects.



Plutonium is a fuel produced by breeder reactors. It's also the basic material of nuclear explosives. But if it is properly handled, the world can benefit from plentiful, clean, economical energy by using breeders. We should do this because the breeder is one way we can make our uranium resources meet our electricity needs for a thousand or more years.

In fact, the breeder, using plutonium, can provide us with a virtually unlimited supply of safe, clean electricity.



This is one of a series of answers to the most frequently asked questions about breeder reactors.

the Breeder

For other answers or more detailed information, write or call:

Breeder Reactor Corporation
P.O. Box U
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
Telephone: 615-482-9661
(Ext. 542)

Published by Breeder Reactor Corporation 100M278