

University to dismantle nuclear reactor

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University of Washington officials say an old nuclear reactor on its Seattle campus -- unnoticed by most students -- will be dismantled beginning Monday.

The reactor, which has been idle nearly 20 years, is tiny compared with power-generating reactors, The Seattle Times reported, noting it will cost \$4 million and take six months to remove dangerous materials.

Students are upset, however, with the university's selection of LVI Services Inc., a New York-based environmental remediation and demolition service.

Some students wore hazardous-materials suits on campus to protest LVI's selection, saying the company has a questionable record with safety procedures and its treatment of workers, the newspaper said. Company officials had no comment.

The reactor was built for training and educational purposes in 1959 and became operational two years later. The demolition project's manager, Elizabeth Peterson, told the Times it is, perhaps, the world's only reactor housed in a glass building, which allowed students to look and see there was nothing to fear.

The reactor ceased operating in 1988, and its fuel rods were removed the next year. But still remaining are 1960s-style beakers, notebooks and control knobs, Peterson said.

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