

Press release

Mühleberg Nuclear Power Plant ceases operations

BKW ready for first decommissioning of a Swiss nuclear power plant

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After 47 years in operation, BKW will permanently deactivate Mühleberg Nuclear Power Plant (KKM) on 20 December 2019 at 12:30 pm. Work on dismantling the plant will begin on 6 January 2020. This is the first ever decommissioning of a power reactor in Switzerland. BKW is organisationally and financially well prepared for its largest project since the construction of KKM about 50 years ago.



BKW has ensured safe, reliable operations at Mühleberg Nuclear Power Plant for 47 years. Since its commissioning on 6 November 1972, KKM has generated about 130 billion kW hours of electricity, which would cover the current consumption of a city such as Bern for more than 100 years. Plant availability of more than 90% has enabled this, through continual investment by BKW in retrofitting and plant safety. This means that KKM faces deactivation at its highest technological peak.

Meticulously planned deactivation of operations

During the annual outage in summer 2018, the core of KKM was loaded with fuel elements for the last 15-month operational cycle, taking it to 20 December 2019.

The fuel quantities were calculated to allow KKM to reduce operations from mid-November. The shutdown of the plant is carried out in steps, with the first of the two turbines removed from the grid on the first hours of 20 December and the second removed shortly after noon the same day. Operations will be permanently deactivated when the last control rod is removed from between the fuel elements at 12:30 pm. This will stop the chain reaction and deactivate the reactor.

Decommissioning on schedule

On 30 October 2013, BKW decided that it would keep KKM open only until the end of 2019 and would then decommission it. This early decision meant that BKW's largest project since the construction of the plant was well prepared and planned. The project is on course in every respect. The legally binding decommissioning order from the Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications is in hand, as well as the go-ahead from ENSI, the Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate, for establishment of the technical post-operational phase. This means the path is clear for dismantling work to begin on 6 January 2020.

The decommissioning of KKM will take about 15 years, concluding in 2034. During this decommissioning period, the focus will be on the safety of the general public, the environment and employees, just as it was during operations. BKW will carry out the decommissioning largely with its own employees, who have the invaluable expertise and comprehensive knowledge of the plant. For highly specialised, one-off tasks, BKW will engage experts and service providers with international experience in the dismantling of nuclear power plants. The most important of these commissions have already been issued and the necessary external services thus secured.

Financing of the decommissioning and disposal of radioactive waste has also been organised. BKW will cover the necessary costs in their entirety; it has made the corresponding payments, built up the associated reserves and will continue to pay into the decommissioning and waste disposal funds controlled by the federal government. According to a cost study from 2016, the costs for decommissioning and disposal total CHF 3 billion, 80% of which are already covered. The remaining 20% will be incurred by 2126 and will be covered by further fund contributions and plant yields.

BKW is in transition

The deactivation of KKM will reduce BKW's electricity production by a quarter, and by half in the canton of Bern. The decommissioning is one element in the transformation of BKW from energy company to international energy and infrastructure service provider. Drawing on its skills in the energy sector, the company now provides grid, infrastructure and building technology services throughout Europe. In recent years, BKW has grown to a workforce of about 10,000, with the majority active in the Services division. This means that BKW is well positioned for tomorrow's energy and infrastructure challenges.

More on operations, deactivation and decommissioning of KKM

On 20 December 2019, from midday to 12:40 pm, a special edition of the programme *Schweiz aktuell extra* on SRF 1 and SRF online will report live on the deactivation of KKM. Follow the deactivation of KKM in [this video](#). An overview of past and future KKM milestones can be found [here](#). Find more information on the decommissioning of KKM at www.bkw.ch/stilllegung and in this [brochure](#).

Transparent communications to continue during decommissioning

For BKW, transparent communication will remain a priority during the decommissioning. From 20 December 2019 to end of May 2020, a photo exhibition in KKM's visitor centre will present images from the plant's operational years. In summer 2020, a new exhibition of KKM's operations and decommissioning will open. Public information sessions on project milestones will continue. Media professionals will be invited and informed on key project steps. The first media event is planned for the first half of 2020. The invitation will follow at a later date.