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## Robot suit to be used in Fukushima cleanup, controlled by brain waves



(<http://japandailypress.com/robot-suit-to-be-used-in-fukushima-cleanup-controlled-by-brain-waves-1816592>)

Japanese researchers on Thursday showed off a full-body [robotic](http://japandailypress.com/tag/robot) suit that is intended to be used by those working at the damaged [Fukushima](http://japandailypress.com/tag/fukushima) nuclear plant. The brain wave-controlled suit is meant to allow those wearing heavy radiation protecting gear to move freely without feeling the weight. In what is said to be a coincidence, the suit is called HAL, for Hybrid Assistive Limb, the same name as the evil supercomputer in the famous sci-fi movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*. “I’m sorry Dave, but I can’t let you go near that radioactive debris.”

HAL has a network of sensors that are used to monitor the user’s brain signals, then it moves the suit’s limbs at the same time as the wearer, meaning there is little to no weight or force on their muscles. While Fukushima workers have to wear a 60 kilogram (132 pound) tungsten vest while working in [radiation](http://japandailypress.com/tag/radiation) zones, it would be almost weightless, says University of Tsukuba engineering professor Yoshiyuki Sankai. The suit has other important features, like blocking radiation, interior fans to help circulate air, and monitoring breathing and heart-rates for signs of fatigue.

The robotic suit was shown off as a part of Japan Robot Week, which also showcased other robot devices meant to aid in the decommissioning of the damaged nuclear reactor. A small robot that runs on treads was displayed as a tool that could travel over rough terrain and go into areas that aren’t safe for humans in order to gather information. As the cleanup efforts at the Fukushima plant are expected to take decades, Eiji Koyanagi, an inventor at the [Chiba Institute of Technology](http://japandailypress.com/tag/chiba-institute-of-technology), says that nuclear workers need to be protected.

While the HAL suit seems like it would be an incredibly useful, effective way to help those working at Fukushima, there still seems to be a big risk in wearing it. What if the suit should malfunction, or its power source run out, making the limbs impossible to move, or incredibly heavy. Then the wearer could become trapped inside and unable to get out of a difficult situation. There’s also the chance that suit could be used for, say, less beneficial purposes. For example? The name of the company that made the suit is Cyberdyne, the same as the evil corporation responsible for the killing machine in the 1984 film *Terminator*. And we’re supposed to believe that is *also* a coincidence.

[[via](http://www.thefrontierpost.com/news/10626/) <http://www.thefrontierpost.com/news/10626/> Frontier Post]



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