

July 20, 2004

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-04-007

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region III staff on this date.

Facility

First Energy Nuclear Operating Company
Perry 1
Perry, Ohio
Docket No: 050-440

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: ALERT DECLARED BECAUSE OF MALFUNCTIONING RADIATION MONITOR

DESCRIPTION:

At 3:44 a.m. EDT on July 20, 2004, the Perry licensee declared an Alert when the plant received an unexpected maximum reading on an effluent radiation monitor for the offgas treatment system. The monitor, which measures gaseous radioactivity, is one of three monitors for the offgas treatment system; the other two, which measure particulate radioactivity and radioactive iodine, showed no increase from normal levels. When the gaseous effluent monitor showed the high reading, the effluent monitoring system automatically shifted to a broader range radiation monitor. It, too, showed no elevated release level. The monitors measure radioactivity in gases that are released from the plant after filtering and treatment.

The licensee declared an Alert under its emergency plan when it could not determine that the elevated reading was erroneous within 15 minutes. Subsequent chemistry analysis of the reactor cooling water and measurements from other radiation monitoring equipment in the plant showed no evidence of abnormal radiation levels. The plant, which was operating at 100 percent power, continued to operate at 100 percent power with no other abnormal indications.

The utility terminated the Alert classification at 9:01 a.m. EDT after it concluded the elevated reading on the gaseous effluent monitor was erroneous, resulting from an equipment malfunction. The plant staff is currently troubleshooting the problem.

When the Alert was declared, the NRC resident inspector responded to the plant site to monitor the utility's activities. Region III (Chicago) monitored the situation from its Incident Response Center until the utility terminated the Alert. The resident inspector will continue to monitor the utility's troubleshooting activities.

The State of Ohio has been notified of this event. The utility has issued a news release. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with utility management.

The NRC Operations Center was notified of this event at 4:04 a.m. EDT on July 20, 2004. This information is current as of 10 a.m. EDT on July 20, 2004.

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