

April 9, 2007

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-07-004

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 IV staff on this date.

Facility

Energy Northwest
Columbia Generating Station
Docket: 50-397 License No. NPF-21

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: ALERT DECLARATION DUE TO A TRANSFORMER FIRE AND INITIATION OF A TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION REQUIRED PLANT SHUTDOWN

DESCRIPTION: On April 7, 2007, at 1:27 p.m. (PDT), control room operators received numerous annunciator alarms associated with Inverter IN-2A/2B SYNC. Equipment operators were dispatched to investigate and shortly thereafter reported a fire in Transformer E-TR-IN/2. Transformer E-TR-IN/2 is a backup source of power for a static transfer switch which supplies power to a vital instrument panel. The fire brigade was dispatched and the local Hanford Fire Department was notified. At 1:39 p.m. (PDT), equipment operators reported that the fire was out after they discharged a fire extinguisher. The plant remained at 95 percent power throughout the event, and there was no change in major plant parameters. The licensee conducted an inspection of the transformer and other surrounding equipment and did not note any additional damage.

At 1:44 p.m. (PDT) the licensee declared an ALERT in accordance with the plant's emergency procedures because of a confirmed fire in a safe shutdown building and a report by plant personnel that there was visible damage to the affected safe shutdown building or equipment contained within the safe shutdown building. At 1:51 p.m. (PDT), a reflash watch was established.

In response to the licensee's ALERT declaration, the NRC staff held a conference call at approximately 2:16 p.m. (PDT) on April 7, with NRR, NSIR, the RIV staff, and a licensee Shift Manager to discuss the details of the event. Both NRC resident inspectors responded to the site and the event. The licensee exited the ALERT at 5:21 p.m. (PDT) after determining that the transformer was electrically isolated and no longer met the conditions for the ALERT.

Subsequently, on April 9, 2007 at 1:26 a.m. (PDT), the licensee notified the NRC of its initiation of a technical specification required shutdown of the Columbia Generating Station. The plant shutdown is being undertaken because of subsequent complications stemming from the recovery of the failure of the backup power supply to power inverter E-IN-2A/2B. Removal of the damaged transformer caused a vital instrumentation panel to lose its electrical ground, which has impacted some of the equipment loads fed by their power supply.

The plant is currently in Mode 3 (Hot Shutdown).

The NRC received notification of the ALERT by the licensee at 2:26 p.m. (PDT) on April 7, 2007.

The state of Washington was notified of the event by the Regional State Liaison Officer. Two press releases were issued by the licensee.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 8:00 a.m. (PDT) on April 9, 2007.

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