

February 3, 2000

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-IV-00-007

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 Region IV staff in Arlington, Texas on this date.

Facility

Energy Northwest
Washington Nuclear 2
Richland, Washington
Dockets: 50-397

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: MEDIA INTEREST IN HIGH TRITIUM CONCENTRATIONS IN GROUNDWATER
FROM A DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY BURIAL SITE

The Department of Energy (DOE) informed Energy Northwest of high tritium readings from a well located near the WNP-2 meteorological tower. The tower is located on the west end of the owner-controlled area. The WNP-2 site is approximately 10 miles northwest of Richland, Washington. Today, a news story in the Tri-City Herald similarly reported that this ground water sample contained 400 times the drinking water standard of 20,000 pico-curies per liter. The tritium is believed to come from a DOE burial site adjacent to the Energy Northwest owner-controlled area, which is approximately 3 1/2 miles from the Columbia River. DOE is working with Energy Northwest to develop a sample plan to determine the extent of the plume and any necessary adjustments to the site remediation schedule. DOE plans a press conference at 1 p.m. today in the Richland, Washington, Federal Building.

The state of Washington was informed.

Region IV received notification of the press interest from Doug Coleman, Manager, Regulatory Affairs, WNP-2, at 6:30 a.m. PST. Region IV has informed EDO/NRR/PA.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 11:00 a.m. CST.

Contact: Linda Joy Smith (817)860-8137
James F. Melfi (817)860-8269

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