

February 15, 2002

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-02-010

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: NPF-21

**Licensee Emergency Classification**

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

SUBJECT: PLANT SHUTDOWN REQUIRED BY TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

DESCRIPTION: On February 13, while conducting testing on the Division II emergency diesel generator following maintenance, an alarm was received indicating that the output breaker was open when it was in fact closed. Subsequent troubleshooting determined that the mechanically operated contacts in the breaker were not operating properly. Due to the inability to identify the specific cause of the failure, repair the breaker, and return the system to an operable status prior to exceeding the expiration of the completion time of Technical Specification Limiting Condition for Operation 3.8.1, Required Action B.4, a plant shutdown was initiated at 1:00 a.m. (PST), and was completed at 12:57 p.m. (PST) without complications.

Following a loss of offsite power event, the emergency diesel generator would have started and the output breaker (Cutler-Hammer) would have closed on to the safety-related bus, but the malfunctioning mechanically operated contacts would have prevented most of the significant safety-related loads associated with that bus from subsequently starting automatically because they would not have sensed that the diesel generator output breaker was closed.

The licensee intends to complete troubleshooting, identify the root cause of the malfunction, and review the results for generic applicability. The licensee also intends to perform inspections and preventive maintenance on 14 similar breakers with active safety-related functions. Additional maintenance will be conducted on balance-of-plant equipment while the plant is shutdown.

The state of Washington will be informed.

The licensee issued a press release. Region IV received notification of the decision to conduct the shutdown from the licensee at 8:45 p.m. (PST) on February 13, 2002, via telephone. Region IV has informed the following offices: EDO, NRR, and PA.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 9 a.m. (PST) on February 15, 2002.

Region IV has initiated a special inspection in response to this event.

CONTACTS: William B. Jones 817/860-8147  
George S. Replogle 509/377-2627