

March 19, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-03-013

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

**Palisades Nuclear Power Plant
Nuclear Management Corporation, LLC
Covert, MI 49043
Docket: 50-255
License: DPR-20**

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: ALERT DECLARED DUE TO A FIRE WITH THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT SAFETY SYSTEMS

DESCRIPTION:

At about 8:37 p.m. (EST) on March 18, 2003, with the reactor shut down and in Mode 5 (cold shutdown), a fire alarm activated in the cable spreading room and control room operators received reports of smoke. At approximately the same time, Charging Pump P-55A tripped during a planned evolution to swap the suction path from the volume control tank to the boric acid addition tank. The fire brigade responded to the cable spreading room and observed a significant amount of smoke in the room but no flames were identified. Offsite fire assistance was called to the plant and assisted the licensee's fire brigade as requested. No injuries were reported.

The licensee declared an ALERT under its emergency plan at 8:47 p.m. (EST), due to a fire potentially affecting safety systems. NRC Region III (Lisle, IL) and Headquarters Offices monitored the situation and the resident inspector responded to the site. The ALERT was terminated at 11:26 p.m. (EST) after the licensee's preliminary investigation determined that the likely cause of the smoke was damage to the circuit breaker for Pump P-55A. The breaker failure also caused the feeder breaker to the associated load center to trip, as designed, which resulted in a loss of the load center. Other equipment affected by the loss of the load center included Charging Pump P-55B and Emergency Diesel Generator 1-2 Ventilation Fans.

This event did not affect the shutdown cooling system and therefore, reactor decay heat removal was maintained and reactor coolant temperatures remained stable.

Appropriate state and local officials were notified of the event. The utility issued a news release.

The licensee is investigating the cause of the breaker failure. The resident inspectors are monitoring the licensee's investigation, maintenance, and repair activities. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

A one-hour notification report was made to the NRC Headquarters Operations Officer on March 18, 2003 at 9:05 p.m. (EST). A notification update was made on March 18, 2003 at 11:26 p.m. (EST). This information is current as of March 19, 2003 at 10:30 a.m. (CST).

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