April 24, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-03-022

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	Licensee Emergency Classification
Perry	___ Notification of Unusual Event
First Energy	_x_ Alert
Perry, Ohio	___ Site Area Emergency
Docket: 50-440	___ General Emergency
License: NPF 58	___ Not Applicable

SUBJECT: ALERT DECLARED DUE TO A HIGH RADIATION ALARM IN THE FUEL HANDLING BUILDING

DESCRIPTION:

At around 11 a.m. EDT on April 24, 2003, high radiation alarms for iodine and fission gases went off in Perry Nuclear Power Station's fuel handling building.

The Perry plant is currently in a refueling outage. Workers were examining a leaking fuel bundle in the fuel building. A damaged fuel pin was being examined under water when a few bubbles of radioactive gas were released, setting off high radiation alarms. The fuel handling building was immediately evacuated.

When plant personnel took radiation level readings after the alarms were received, they saw that the radiation levels had already returned to normal. As a result, the Perry Nuclear Power Station entered and exited an ALERT, as specified by their emergency plan, at 11: 50 a.m. EDT. There is currently no evidence that any workers were contaminated. There is no evidence of any offsite release of radiation as a result of this occurrence.

The damaged fuel bundle remains in a secure location in the fuel handling building. The licensee is conducting a survey of radiological conditions in the fuel handling building. NRC resident inspectors are monitoring the situation at the plant.

The licensee has notified appropriate state and local officials and the local media. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

The Licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this event at 12:07 p.m. EDT on April 24, 2003. This information is current as of 4 p.m. EDT on April 24, 2003.

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