

October 10, 2003

This event is not available for public disclosure per Agreement State request until 10/15/03

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-03-042

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

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation
Green Bay, WI
General License
(Agreement State licensee)

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

DESCRIPTION:

On October 10, 2003, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) notified the NRC Operations Center that employees at the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation coal-fired J. Pulliam Power Plant in Green Bay, Wisconsin, may have received exposures, in excess of regulatory limits, from a nuclear density gauge.

The gauge is a TN Technologies model 5200 fixed gauge containing a nominal 50 millicurie cesium-137 sealed source. On September 25, 2003, the gauge was removed from its location on a coal chute by contract workers. The source shutter was not closed. The gauge was placed on the floor near a walkway, which has regular foot traffic by plant employees and contractors, until it was discovered on October 9, 2003. The licensee's Radiation Safety Officer closed and locked the gauge shutter and placed the gauge in a secure area. The Radiation Safety Officer measured radiation levels in the direction of the open shutter. At a distance of 8 feet he measured 4 to 5 mR/hr and at 3 feet a level of 10 mR/hr.

The DHFS was informed of the incident on October 9, 2003, and will perform an on-site investigation during the week of October 13, 2003. The DHFS investigators will evaluate potential health effects to workers exposed to the gauge and will determine the number of workers that may have been exposed. The NRC is monitoring the State's investigation.

The NRC's Office of State and Tribal Programs and Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards have been notified. This information was discussed with the State and is current as of 2:00 p.m. (CDT) on October 10, 2003.

CONTACTS:

James Lynch
(630) 829-9661

Kevin Null
(630) 829-9854