

October 12, 2005

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-05-016

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, Arlington, Texas, staff on this date.

Facility

Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station
Units 2 and 3
Buckeye, Arizona
Dockets: 50-529; 50-530
Licenses: NPF-51; NPF-74

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION REQUIRED SHUTDOWN OF PALO VERDE
UNITS 2 AND 3

This Preliminary Notification is being issued to inform recipients of a technical specification required shutdown of Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS), Units 2 and 3, because of a condition which affects the operability of emergency core cooling systems. This condition also affects Unit 1 which was already shutdown for a scheduled refueling outage.

On October 11, 2005, at approximately 4:02 p.m. and 4:55 p.m. (MST), PVNGS Units 2 and 3, respectively, commenced reactor shutdowns required by the technical specifications. Currently, Units 2 and 3 are shutdown and are being cooled down. In a cooldown condition, the emergency core cooling systems are not required to be operable. The shutdowns occurred because of the inability to demonstrate that the emergency core cooling systems could perform their safety function, as designed, under certain postulated accident scenarios (refer also to NRC Event Notification 42050). The licensee made this determination following a review of this issue after a question regarding the design of the emergency core cooling systems was raised by NRC inspectors. The licensee is continuing to evaluate this condition to identify corrective actions.

NRC resident inspectors monitored the shutdown of the units. Region IV received notification of this by telephone from the licensee at approximately 4 p.m. (CDT) on October 11, 2005. The information presented herein has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 2 p.m. (CDT) on October 12, 2005. The state of Arizona has been notified by telephone.

This preliminary notification is issued for information only. The NRC is following this issue as part of an ongoing supplemental inspection. The inspection will assess the adequacy of the licensee's root cause analysis and corrective actions associated with a safety significant (Yellow) inspection finding issued in April. That finding also involves the emergency core cooling system of all three PVNGS units.

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