

Austin, Joe

From: Crawford, Kim
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 1:45 PM
To: HNP All Employees
Subject: A message from Chris: state notification of tritiated water
Attachments: image001.jpg; image002.jpg



A message from Chris
Vice President, Harris

State notification regarding leak of tritiated water
January 12, 2010

Today, we made a notification to the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the NRC regarding a leak involving tritiated water.

An operator discovered the issue Sunday in the waste neutralization basin flash mixer return pipe. Approximately 1,000 gallons of water containing a low level of tritium leaked into the surrounding soil. The pipe was immediately shut off and crews expect repairs to be complete by week's end.

This water is not used for drinking consumption. Based on the leak location and low tritium levels, there is no health or safety risk to employees or to the public.

Tritium is a radioactive isotope of the element hydrogen. It is produced naturally in the upper atmosphere. It is used commercially in devices such as exit signs and wristwatches and is also a byproduct of the nuclear process.

The Environmental Protection Agency's established guidelines for tritium concentration set the safety threshold at 20,000 picocuries per liter for drinking water. The highest level found as a result of the leaking water line was around 5,500 picocuries per liter, all on the plant site.

It is possible the issue could generate public or media interest. If you have any questions, please see your supervisor.

Christ