

June 20, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-96-038

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 Region III staff (Lisle, Illinois) on this date.

Facility	Licensee Emergency Classification
Commonwealth Edison Co.	Notification of Unusual Event
Dresden 3	Alert
Morris, Illinois	Site Area Emergency
Dockets: 50-249	General Emergency
	X Not Applicable

Subject: PLANT SHUTDOWN DUE TO POTENTIAL GENERIC 4160-VOLT BREAKER FAILURE MECHANISM

At 4:30 a.m. (CDT) on June 20, 1996, the licensee initiated a shutdown of Unit 3 based on the results, to date, of a root cause investigation for a 4160-volt breaker failure. On June 11, a 4160-volt GE Magna-Blast motor supply breaker (low pressure coolant injection) failed to open on demand from the control room. Root cause investigation of that failure identified hardening of grease in the "trip latch roller bearing" as the most likely cause for the failure.

Subsequent inspection of four similar 4160-volt breakers (formerly in service but not currently installed) on June 19 identified two breakers that had evidence of grease hardening. In one breaker, which had a high number of in-service operations (cycles), hardened grease was observed on the trip lever roller bearing which made the mechanism "stiff" to operate and unreliable. In a second breaker, the latch mechanism moved freely; however, fibrous material from adjacent bushing was observed in the bearing grease. The licensee believes the fibrous material may accelerate the hardening. The licensee identified 13 safety-related breakers on Unit 3 that are believed to be susceptible to this failure mechanism, i.e., number of operations vs. last overhaul.

The plant shutdown will allow the licensee to make a final determination of the root cause for the initial breaker failure and evaluate options and corrective actions for addressing the issue. Tentative plans require a two-week outage for inspection and overhaul of all 26 safety-related breakers on Unit 3. Similar actions are being taken with regards to Unit 2 4160-volt safety-related breakers prior to its startup.

A Region III (Chicago) engineering specialist has been dispatched to the Dresden site to monitor the licensee's activities in response to the breaker failure.

The State of Illinois has been notified. The information in this Preliminary Notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

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The licensee notified the NRC Resident Inspector of this plant shutdown at about 2:00 a.m. (CDT) on June 20, 1996. This information is current as of 2:00 p.m. on June 20, 1996.

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