

Date: August 26, 1980

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURENCE--PNO-III-80-159 Page 1 of 2

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IE staff as of this date.

Facility: Consumers Power Company  
Palisades Nuclear Power Plant  
Docket No. 50-255  
Covert, MI

Subject: REACTOR TRIP WITH LONG-TERM RECOVERY OF STEAM GENERATOR LEVEL INDICATION

The licensee reported that at 3:42 a.m. EDT on August 26, 1980, while operating at 88 percent power, one of the condensate pumps tripped. This resulted in low suction pressure to the main feed water pumps and both main feedwater pumps automatically tripped. The plant operators manually tripped the reactor and the turbine, and also manually started the motor-driven auxiliary feedwater pump.

The auxiliary feedwater flow rate is preadjusted to supply 300 gallons per minute flow (150 GPM per steam generator). The steam generator level indicators which cover only the top ten percent of the steam generator range, dropped off scale low. The level in one steam generator was recovered to an on scale reading in 1-1/2 hours, and the other was recovered in 2-1/2 hours. During this interval of off scale low level indication the licensee maintained the primary system temperature and pressure essentially constant by controlling the steam flow out of the steam generators. This steam is directed either to the main condenser or to the atmosphere as required to maintain the primary system pressure and temperature. As the decay heat load decreases the steam generator level increases and ultimately comes back on scale. At this time the operators reduced the feedwater flow rate to avoid a possible water hammer when the feedwater sparger is again covered.

NRC has expressed a concern regarding this long-time interval without a direct indication of steam generator level and has requested that, prior to resumption of operation, the licensee reexamine their calculations and procedures to determine if this practice is justified and to determine if the time interval can be safely shortened. According to the licensee the operating procedures covering this area are based on previous calculations and test data; however, the licensee has agreed that they will reexamine the entire area prior to restart per the NRC request. NRC technical personnel are performing an independent review and analysis of this matter for discussion with the licensee prior to the reactor restart.

The site Senior Resident Inspector was on site within one hour following the reactor trip and observed the licensee's actions closely.



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The licensee made a press release.

The State of Michigan will be notified.

Region III was initially notified of this event by the Hqs. Duty Officer at 3:15 a.m. CST on August 26, 1980. This information is current as of 2:00 p.m., August, 1980.

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Distribution: Transmitted H St. 2:42 ✓  
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RII-2:56 ✓ T. E. Murley, RES

RII-3:00 PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

RII-3:03