

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: Consumers Power Company  
Palisades Nuclear Generating Plant  
Covert, MI 49043

Docket No. 50-255

Licensee Emergency Classification:  
 Notification of an Unusual Event  
 Alert  
 Site Area Emergency  
 General Emergency  
 Not Applicable

Subject: DROPPED CONTROL ROD ASSEMBLY

At 6:20 a.m. (EDT), April 27, 1988, while operating at full power, a control rod suddenly dropped from the full out position to the full-in position. Operators took prompt action, reducing power to less than 75% within two hours, and then to less than 50% in an effort to recover the assembly.

The licensee decided to shut down the unit to examine the control rod's clutch assembly, which is believed to be the cause of the problem. The licensee also wants to determine if the problem has generic implications. The unit is expected to be down more than 48 hours while the licensee investigates the problem.

An unrelated incident occurred on April 28, 1988, at about 2:15 a.m. (EDT), with the reactor in hot shutdown from an earlier event. During the performance of a test included in the Reactor Protection Status check list, one of two Reactor Protection System (RPS) clutch power supply trip breakers, which are backup to the primary automatic and manual RPS trips did not open when a manual push button was pressed. The licensee suspects a failure of an undervoltage relay in the breaker. The licensee noted that the primary RPS automatic control rod trip mechanism was operable and would have tripped the reactor in the event a valid signal had come in. In addition, backup systems also were available, including another manual trip mechanism which had been successfully tested on April 27.

Region III (Chicago) is monitoring the control rod mechanism investigation and the possible replacement of the undervoltage relay breaker.

The State of Michigan will be notified.

Region III first learned the unit would be shut down for more than 48 hours at 9 a.m. (CDT), April 28, 1988. This information is current as of 12:30 p.m. (CDT), April 28, 1988.

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SUBJECT: PNO-III-88-043: on 880427, dropped control rod assembly.

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