

January 19, 1979

EJ

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-79-10

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of event 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 on this date.

Facility: Iowa Electric Light and Power Company
Duane Arnold (DN 50-331)
Palo, IA

Subject: NONCONFORMING WELDS IN SAFE END REPAIRS

Preliminary findings by NRC inspectors, assisted by NRC consultants, during inspections conducted at the site on January 17-19, 1979, indicate that seven welds on five of the eight safe-ends which are under repair do not meet code requirements.

The safe-ends had been replaced following development of stress corrosion cracks which resulted in one safe-end having a thru-wall crack in June 1978 (PNO-78-125).

Allegations had been received by the NRC inspectors on January 11, 1979, relating to the adequacy of nine welds on seven of the safe-ends (PNO-79-05). Certain of these welds had been questioned by NRC inspectors during previous inspections.

The nature of the code nonconformances which were identified by the NRC inspectors all related to the conditions at the root of the welds in which sharp crevice-like indications were found, apparently due to weld material either being pushed through the weld, or sucked up during initial weld passes. There were also indications that the inert cover gas which was supposed to be maintained in the pipe had been lost or not maintained during the root weld pass.

In connection with the apparent code nonconformance, the NRC inspectors are concerned over the existence of crevice conditions in the root of the welds which may be potential sites for subsequent stress corrosion attack similar to that which led to the shutdown and repairs.

Investigations of the quality assurance documentation in connection with the allegations is continuing.

The licensee was informed today (1/19/79) that the NRC does not agree with the licensee's finding that the seven welds are acceptable.

Operation of the reactor will be delayed until the weld quality related problems are resolved.

Media interest is expected because of the delay in resumption of reactor operations. The State of Iowa will be informed.

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