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PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

March 28, 1979

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-79-69

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: Philadelphia Electric Company
Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit 3
Docket No. 50-278, License No. DPR-56

Subject: RADIOACTIVE RELEASE IN EXCESS OF REGULATORY LIMITS

A release occurred during the period 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. on March 26, 1979. The release exceeded the Technical Specification release rate for gross activity, except for halogens and particulate with half lives longer than eight days, for a period of 45 minutes. The release produced three activity spikes, the maximum of which was 280% of the Tech. Spec. release rate limit. Total release is estimated at 47.8 curies of principally noble gases. A charcoal sample covering the period from February 25 thru March 27, 1979 indicated a total iodine release of 2.04 millicuries.

The release occurred due to operator error in line-up of valves between equipment drains, floor drains and the recombiner. The release was terminated after correct valving was accomplished.

The plant power was reduced from 900 MW(e) to 200 MW(e) during the release.

Some personnel were exposed during the release, however, at this time the licensee's preliminary review indicates no personnel exposure in excess of regulatory limits.

The licensee is performing whole body counting of these individuals.

The licensee is not planning any additional offsite sampling other than their routine program.

The Region I resident inspector is following licensee corrective actions.

Media interest is expected because of release in excess of regulatory limits. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been informed. A press release is not currently planned by the licensee or NRC.

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NRC, Region I, (Philadelphia) received notification of this occurrence by a telephone call from an on site inspector at 2:10 P.M. on March 27, 1979.

Contact: LJCunningham, IE x28188 LBHigginbotham, IE x28454

Distribution: Transmitted H St 5:00

Chairman Hendrie

Commissioner Kennedy

Commissioner Gilinsky

Commissioner Bradford

Commissioner Ahearne

S. J. Chilk, SECY

C. C. Kammerer, CA

(For Distribution)

Transmitted: MNBB 5:25

L. V. Gossick, EDO

H. L. Ornstein, EDO

J. J. Fouchard, PA

N. M. Haller, MPA

R. G. Ryan, OSP

H. K. Shapar, ELD

P. Bldg 5:10

H. R. Denton, NRR

R. C. DeYoung, NRR

R. J. Mattson, NRR

V. Stello, NRR

R. S. Boyd, NRR

SS Bldg 5:15

W. J. Dircks, NMSS

J. G. Davis, IE

Region I 6:15

(MAIL)

J. J. Cummings, OIA

R. Minogue, SD

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