

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-93-62

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.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Licensee Emergency Classification</u>
University of Missouri (Rolla)	General Emergency
Research Reactor	Site Area Emergency
Rolla, Missouri	Alert
	Unusual Event
Docket No. 50-123	X Not Applicable

Subject: STARTUP WITH INOPERABLE NUCLEAR INSTRUMENTATION

On October 26, 1993, the research reactor was started up with the reactor period meter and related instrumentation inoperable. After about 58 minutes the reactor operator noted the inoperable meter, conferred with the senior reactor operator, and shut down the reactor.

The reactor operator, working with two engineering students, had completed a reactor startup at 1:50 p.m. and was increasing reactor power from 200 watts to 2 kilowatts. The malfunctioning instrumentation was discovered at 2:48 p.m.

The period meter measures the rate of increase of neutron production in the reactor core. Normal procedures provide that both the period meter and power indication be monitored during power changes. The reactor operator, however, was following only the power indication.

The period meter malfunction was caused by the failure of a test switch. The switch failure also affected the period strip chart and the related period scram, rod runback, and rod interlock functions. These functions are required to be operable under the Technical Specifications. Because of the low power levels the malfunctions did not represent a health and safety hazard.

Region III (Chicago), assisted by the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and the Office for the Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data, will perform a special inspection of this incident during the week of November 1, 1993. The licensee has agreed to contact Region III prior to any decision to restart the reactor.

The State of Missouri has been notified. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

Region III was notified of this incident by the licensee at 2:30 p.m. (CDT) on October 27, 1993. This information is current as of 12 noon on October 29, 1993.

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08-032

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