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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

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*Callahan*  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(October 27, 1980)

**NRC STAFF SENDS INFORMATION TO ALL NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS ON  
LEAKAGE OF RIVER WATER INTO INDIAN POINT UNIT 2 CONTAINMENT**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff over the weekend sent an information notice to the operators of all nuclear power plants about the circumstances that contributed to leakage of Hudson River water into the containment building of the Indian Point Unit 2 reactor near Buchanan, New York.

The plant, owned by the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, was operating at full power early on October 17 when a nuclear instrument malfunctioned. The plant was shut down about 4:15 a.m., and workers entered the containment to investigate the problem at about 11 a.m. A large quantity of water was found on the containment building floor and subsequently also in the cavity under the reactor vessel. The containment sumps were filled with water. The total quantity has been estimated to be about 100,000 gallons. The principal source of leakage was from fan cooler units which are used to cool the air inside containment. Subsequent to the 4:15 a.m. shutdown on October 17, the reactor was restarted twice on that day, and again on the morning of October 20, before the plant was placed in a cold shutdown condition on October 22.

The cavity under the vessel accumulated water which resulted in wetting the bottom of the vessel to a height of about nine feet. Analyses are being made to determine if unacceptable thermal stresses were placed in the reactor vessel.

The following combination of conditions contributed to this situation:

1. Both containment sump pumps were out of order; one because of blown electrical fuses, and the other because of the binding of a float that senses water in the sump and controls the starting of the sump pump.
2. The operators were not alerted to the rising water level in containment by the sump water indicating lights.
3. The hold-up tanks that receive water from the sump pumps also received water from other sources, such as the continuing flow of process water, and laboratory drain water, which masked the absence of sump pump flow to the holding tanks.

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- 4. There were significant, multiple service water (river water) leaks from several containment fan cooling units directly onto the floor of the containment. These coolers have a history of leakage. Because the water comes from the river and returns to it, rather than from a closed system of storage tanks, there is no water inventory from which losses could be detected.

The Consolidated Edison Company is making modifications and repairs to the affected systems. The NRC staff must be satisfied with Consolidated Edison's corrective actions and analyses before restart of the plant would be permitted.

The NRC staff expects to issue additional letters or bulletins when the NRC investigation has provided a basis for recommending or requiring licensees or applicants for licenses to take specific actions.



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