

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: Palisades Consumers Power Co. Covert, MI

Licensee Emergency Classification
 General Emergency _____ Site Area Emergency _____
 Alert _____ Unusual Event X N/A _____

Docket No. 50-255

DCD

Subject: FUEL ASSEMBLY STUCK IN UPPER REACTOR INTERNAL COMPONENT

On February 29, 1992, licensee personnel observed a fuel assembly stuck in the Upper Guide Structure as it was being lifted from the reactor in preparation for refueling. The plant had been shut down since February 6, 1992, for refueling and scheduled maintenance.

The Upper Guide Structure is one of the reactor components located above the reactor core. Its normal function is to provide secure guide paths for the reactor control rods. It must be removed to permit refueling. When the Upper Guide Structure was lifted out of the reactor into the flooded refueling cavity, personnel saw a fuel assembly stuck under the structure. Licensee personnel were sensitive to this possibility because a similar event took place at Palisades in September 1988.

The licensee declared an Unusual Event under its Emergency Plan at 11:05 p.m. on February 29. Containment integrity was promptly established by closing the equipment hatch. No unusual radiation readings were observed. The area above the reactor had been flooded for refueling and the water provided ample shielding.

Region III (Chicago) dispatched the Senior Resident Inspector (SRI) to the site. The SRI and NRC management monitored developments throughout the night. Periodic phone briefings were conducted among various NRC offices, and the NRC Commissioner's Technical Assistants were briefed at 11:00 a.m. on March 1, 1992.

Continuous telephone contact was established among the site, the Headquarters Operations Center and Region III for each active phase of the licensee's recovery effort. The licensee's activities onsite were monitored by the two assigned resident inspectors with support from a D.C. Cook resident inspector and the Region III section chief for the Palisades plant. Continuous monitoring will also be provided for each of the remaining critical activities.

DISTRIBUTION:

HEADQUARTERS OFFICES	
	NMSS
Comm. Rogers	GPA:SP
Comm. Curtiss	GPA:PA
Comm. Remick	GPA:CA
Comm. de Planque	
EDO	
Gen. Counsel	*ASL/P
NRR	Research
AEOD	IRM
Enforcement	ACRS

REGIONS
 Region I
 Region II
 Region IV
 Region V

MAIL TO:
 DCS (Orig)
 DOT (Trans. Only)

FAX TO:

The Chairman	12:27	INPO	12:41
NSAC	12:38	LTC	1:02
PDR (87634-3343)	12:35	OIG	12:30
		NRC OPS CTR	12:43

*Denotes a Displaywriter/PC not an IBM 5520 Terminal

IE 34

- 2 -

As of 9:00 a.m. on March 2, the bundle had been grappled through the guide structure to prevent its falling off. A collar has been placed around it to keep it vertical for the next step in the recovery, which is separating the bundle from the guide structure. The bundle will then be lowered into the reactor core and the guide structure will be moved to its storage location.

The final steps in the recovery will involve regrappling the bundle and moving it to the fuel transfer machine. When the bundle is secure in the transfer machine, the Unusual Event will be terminated.

The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this event at 11:16 p.m. on February 29, 1992. The state of Michigan was also notified by the licensee. The information in this PN has been reviewed with licensee management. This information is current as of 9:00 a.m. on March 2, 1992.

CONTACT:  B. Jorgensen
388-5689

 W. Shafer
388-5656