

March 5, 1992

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-92-14A

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 IV staff on this date.

FACILITY: Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp.
Wolf Creek Generating Station
Docket: 50-482

Licensee Emergency Classification:
 Notification of Unusual Event
 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: FORCED OUTAGE TO EXCEED 72 HOURS (UPDATE)

On February 27, 1992, a plant heatup was in progress in preparation for unit restart following the completion of licensee corrective actions associated with a reactor trip that occurred on February 20, 1992. The licensee replaced a failed synchronizing card which caused two 120-volt ac inverter fuses to fail, resulting in a reactor trip. In addition, the plant was cooled down to repair a leaking reactor vessel head conoseal penetration.

At 12:35 a.m. (CST) on February 28, 1992, with the unit operating at 547°F and 2235 psig (Mode 3), licensee personnel, who were performing a reactor vessel head inspection to verify the adequacy of the conoseal repair, identified a leak on a canopy seal weld of a spare control rod drive mechanism penetration. The licensee brought their code expert in to further evaluate the leakage. At 1:54 a.m. (CST), licensee personnel who were standing on the reactor cavity seal ring heard a loud noise and felt movement of the cavity seal ring. In addition, alarms were received on the seismic monitor and loose parts monitor. The licensee conducted walkdowns and found that a snubber clamp on a residual heat removal system pipe was slightly rotated; however, the licensee has not determined whether this is related to the noise event. The licensee also found that some of the borated polyethylene, which is part of the reactor cavity seal ring shielding, had melted. However, the licensee determined that the cause was not related to the noise event. The licensee formed an incident investigation team to determine the cause of the event.

The licensee is currently receiving assistance from Westinghouse. As of March 4, 1992, the licensee has postulated three causes of the event. They included: (1) movement of piping or components as a result of thermal expansion during plant heatup; (2) a valve closing in one of the plant's piping systems; or (3) an unidentified object in the reactor coolant system piping. The licensee has also determined that two other similar events occurred in May 1990 and January 1992 under similar plant conditions (i.e., a plant heatup in the range of 450-550°F).

Currently, the licensee's investigation is still in progress. A special inspection, consisting of Region IV inspectors and an NRR specialist, will begin on March 6, 1992. A conference call will be held with licensee personnel at 10 a.m. (CST) on March 6, 1992, in order to determine the status of the

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licensee's progress. The licensee has not established a restart schedule, but they have committed to discuss future restart plans with Region IV prior to changing modes.

The licensee has been issuing press releases on a periodic basis. The NRC has responded to media inquiries.

The state of Kansas will be informed.

Region IV received updated information pertaining to this event during a conference call with licensee personnel and members of the NRR and EDO staff at 10 a.m. (CST) on March 4, 1992.

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(5520: 2/21/92 @ 10:30) > (14A: 3/5/92)
Regions & HQ @ 11:55

(PHONE VERIF: 2/21/92) > (14A: 3/5/92)
NRR 964-1168 or 964-1166 @ 11:45