

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: Prairie Island Unit 2 Licensee Emergency Classification  
 Docket No. 50-306 General Emergency Site Area Emergency  
 Alert Unusual Event X N/A

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Subject: AIT TO REVIEW LOSS OF SHUTDOWN COOLING WHILE REACTOR WATER LEVEL BEING LOWERED - UPDATE

The Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) is continuing its review of the loss of shutdown cooling event which occurred on February 20, 1992, at Prairie Island Unit 2. The eight-person team began its inspection on February 22, interviewing plant operators and reviewing plant systems and procedures.

NRC Region III (Chicago) issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to the licensee on February 21, documenting the utility's commitment to investigate the incident, to quarantine equipment involved pending NRC examination, and to maintain elevated reactor cooling water level until consultation with the Regional Administrator. On February 23, 1992, following review by the Regional Administrator, the utility resumed the activities that were underway at the time of the event -- lowering the water level in the reactor in preparation for installing dams in the steam generator nozzles to permit steam generator testing. The authorization was based on the AIT review of the licensee's corrective actions.

The AIT observed the lowering of the reactor water level, which was accomplished without incident.

The AIT's preliminary review indicates that the excessive lowering of the water level in the reactor occurred because of unusual pressure conditions in the reactor cooling system. The pressure monitored (3 pounds per square inch) affected the level indication in a clear plastic tubing monitored by an operator in containment and in the electronic level instrumentation in the control room.

As a result, the water level was lowered about 8 inches further than anticipated so that the inlet to the Residual Heat Removal (RHR) system was partially uncovered. The operating RHR pump was shut off when it began to cavitate (draw air into the pump). Reactor water level was restored using two charging pumps and a second RHR pump. The second RHR pump was then realigned to resume shutdown cooling.

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The AIT will meet with the licensee at 1 p.m. on February 25, 1992, to review the preliminary results of the inspection. The meeting will be open to the public.

The State of Minnesota will be informed of this updated information. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

There has been continuing news media interest in this event and the AIT activities. Both the licensee and NRC Region III have issued news announcements. The team leader has also responded to news media inquiries.

This information is current as of 12:35 p.m., February 24, 1992.

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