

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 staff on this date.

*DmB*

Facility: Northern States Power Company  
Monticello Nuclear Generating Station  
Monticello, MN 55362

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

Docket No: 50-263

Subject: CONTROL ROD DRIVE - EXCESSIVE SCRAM TIMES

The Monticello plant has been shut down since February 3, 1984, for an extended outage which included the replacement of major portions of the recirculation system piping. All of the major outage activities have been completed, the core has been reloaded, and system verification testing prior to unit restart is in progress.

During the surveillance testing of the Control Rod System to verify that the scram times are within the Technical Specification requirements (90% inserted within 3.8 seconds) it was found that the scram times on several of the control rods was excessive (approaching 10 seconds). Investigation by the licensee, including friction testing, verified that there is no mechanical binding of the rods. Additional investigation involved the examination of the screens in the hydraulic flow path on two of the control rod drive mechanisms (CRDM). These examinations revealed that one of the inner screens in flow path was partially plugged, and thus would limit the flow rate during a scram and would lengthen the scram insertion time. The source of the minute particles plugging the screens is from the primary coolant system, which is the system that supplies the fluid and pressure to complete an emergency insertion of the rods (scram). The primary system had been drained for several months to permit the replacement of the recirculation system piping and during this time the primary system clean up system was taken out of service. Even though the piping was cleaned and flushed prior to refilling, various particulates and oxides were present and all of these were not removed by the clean up system prior to the start of the CRD testing.

The licensee is currently accelerating the clean up of the primary coolant system. Following the clean up, the licensee plans to pull each CRDM and flush the flow paths with demineralized water, and to replace the screens in each CRDM with new screens. A final verification test will be performed to assure that all units are functioning properly.

These activities are expected to lengthen the present outage by approximately 15 days, thus, the reactor restart will probably occur sometime between Christmas and New Years.

The State of Minnesota will be notified of this information.

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PDR I&E  
PNO-III-84-106 PDR

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Region III learned of this information on December 5, 1984. This information is current as of December 6, 1984.

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