

April 1, 1996

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-I-96-020

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 Region I staff in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania on this date.

Facility

Northeast Utilities
Millstone 3
Waterford, Connecticut
Dockets: 50-423

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
Alert
Site Area Emergency
General Emergency
X Not Applicable

Subject: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION REQUIRED SHUTDOWN

At 3:48 p.m. on March 30, 1996, Millstone Unit 3 commenced a power reduction to shutdown the plant, as required by Technical Specification 3.6.3 for inoperable containment isolation valves. The operability of four like solenoid valves, the isolation valves from the turbine driven auxiliary feedwater pump to each of the four feedwater lines, was first questioned on March 28, 1996. At that time, it was discovered that these valves would not remain closed to a differential pressure far less than the containment design pressure. The valve supplier (Target Rock Corporation) indicated that the valves were not designed to isolate system pressure in the reverse direction. While the subject valves have a safety function to provide auxiliary feedwater flow, and in fact "fail-open" by design, the Millstone 3 FSAR Table 6.2-65 lists them as containment isolation valves.

After discussion with the NRC on March 29, 1996, the Licensee conducted a bench test on March 30, 1996, of a spare Target Rock solenoid valve, confirming that it would not seat against backpressure without excessive leakage. After the results of that test became known, all four valves were declared inoperable. Further in-plant testing of the valves' ability to seat against backpressure also supported the determination of inoperability. Unit 3 reached mode 5 ("cold shutdown" condition) at 4:03 a.m. on April 1, 1996.

The Licensee is preparing a design change to modify the valves, in conjunction with Target Rock guidance, to allow for compliance with backpressure criteria. Currently, a plant outage of approximately one week duration is scheduled. The NRC is following licensee design changes and modification work. Also the root cause concern with respect to problems with the original design of the valves will be the focus of ongoing NRC team inspection activities.

The licensee did not issue a press release regarding this event, but did make telephonic contact "notifications" with certain area media representatives.

This information is current as of 12:00 p.m. on April 1, 1996.

The State of Connecticut has been informed of this event.

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