

Date: July 10, 1992

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-92-38

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 I staff on this date.

## Facility:

Saxton Nuclear Experimental  
Corporation  
Saxton, Pennsylvania  
Docket No. 50-146

## Licensee Emergency Classification:

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

Subject: POTENTIAL MEDIA INTEREST IN FORMER ALLEGATION CONCERNING SAXTON

Late in 1988, PENELEC, a subsidiary of GPU Nuclear Corporation, received an allegation that, in 1975 or 1976, drums were received at its Williamsburg, Pennsylvania, coal-fired generating station from the nearby Saxton Nuclear Experimental Corporation experimental reactor and were buried under the ash piles at the Williamsburg site. Saxton was operated from 1962-1972 by a consortium of utilities investigating the use of mixed-oxide (uranium and plutonium) fuel. The alieger did not know the contents of the drums, but suspected they might contain radioactive material. Region I was informed of the allegation early in 1989 by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, which also had received the allegation. An NRC Region I Allegation Panel concluded that NRC should interview the alieger, which was done, and that PENELEC should be allowed to complete its investigation, and that NRC would then review the report for completeness. The PENELEC investigators conducted extensive interviews with numerous individuals, sampled and analyzed the ash, and performed radiological surveys of the ash piles with hand held instruments. Based on the measurements all being consistent with natural background radioactivity and radiation, the investigators concluded that the evidence did not substantiate the alieger's concern. Region I reviewed the investigation report, found it complete, and concluded that no further action was required.

However, the investigation report was never formally submitted to the NRC, or included in the Saxton docket file. On July 9, 1992, GPU Nuclear mailed the complete report to the NRC with a request that it be withheld from public disclosure in accordance with 10 CFR 2.790. A redacted version of the report (including an Executive Summary of the report), with the names of most individuals removed, was submitted at the same time. The redacted report will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room, while the complete report will be evaluated to determine if it meets NRC criteria for withholding. This PN is being issued because GPU Nuclear is informing the news media on July 10 of the availability of the redacted Executive Summary, and of the opportunity to visit the Saxton site on July 13. Region I is prepared to respond to media inquiries. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been informed.

CONTACT: James Joyner  
215-337-5370

9207160191 920710  
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PNO-1-92-038 PDR

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\*\*General list for sending PNs by FAX

Region I Form 83

(Rev. June 1992)

Date: July 10, 1992

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--TNO-I-92-38

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\_\_\_ Site Area Emergency  
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Comm. Curtiss

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Comm. de Planque

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(Reactor Licensees)

\*\* General list for sending PINs by FAX

Region I Form 83

(Rev. June 1992)