

October 29, 1984

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-84-75

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 II staff on this date.

FACILITY: Duke Power Company
Catawba Unit 1
Docket No. 50-413
Rock Hill, South Carolina

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

SUBJECT: MEDIA INTEREST IN LEAK DURING PRE-CRITICALITY TESTING

Duke Power Company workers have begun a repair and cleanup necessitated by a three-to-five-gallon-per-minute leak through a reactor vessel in-core thermocouple penetration coupling. The coupling failed on October 23 while initial plant heat-up was under way during pre-criticality testing.

Because the source was unidentified when the leak was first detected, an unusual event was declared at 9:40 p.m. (EDT) on October 23. The unusual event designation was ended at 11:05 a.m. on October 24 after the cause of the leak was found and the reactor coolant system cooled down.

Duke's cleanup entails removal of reactor vessel head insulation, a portion of control rod drive mechanisms and control rod position indication instrumentation. Some of the control rod drives and instruments may be replaced with components from Catawba Unit 2.

The cleanup has caused Duke to revise by 18 days its estimated date for initial criticality, which the licensee now anticipates on December 4. Duke earlier this year was authorized to load fuel and conduct pre-criticality testing at Catawba by the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. A decision on criticality and power operations is now being awaited from the ASLB.

Media interest has occurred. Both Duke and the NRC have responded to inquiries.

The State of South Carolina has been informed.

This information is current as of 1:00 p.m. (EST) today.

Contact: A. Ignatonis, 242-5563

H. C. Dance, 242-5533

8410310413 841029
PDR I&E
PNO-II-84-075 PDR

PDR ADUCK 05000413

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