

January 13, 1993

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-93-01

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 IV staff on this date.

FACILITY:

Houston Lighting & Power Company
South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2
50-498; 499

Licensee Emergency Classification:

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

SUBJECT: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS REQUIRED SHUTDOWN OF SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2

At 3:51 p.m. (CST) on January 12, 1993, South Texas Project, Unit 1, declared a Notification of Unusual Event (NOUE) as a result of commencing a reactor shut down due to Technical Specification (TS) 3.0.3 requirements. At 2:51 p.m., the licensee discovered that 9 of the 12 compensated low steam line pressure and 5 of the 12 steam line high pressure negative rate instruments (four steam lines, each with three trains, each train containing one instrument) were inoperable when it was determined by a record review that the time constant settings utilized in the lead-lag controllers exceeded the requirements of the TS. The signal from these instruments is used to generate steam line isolation signals; in addition, the signal from the compensated low steam line pressure instrument is used to generate a safety injection signal. The procedure used previously by the licensee to calibrate these instruments specified a broader tolerance than the requirements of TS. The calibration of a single channel requires as much as 4 hours, with the licensee having the ability to calibrate three instruments simultaneously.

Investigation by the licensee on Unit 2 revealed similar problems, but to a greater degree as 12 of the 12 compensated low steam line pressure instruments and 7 of the 12 steam line high pressure negative rate instruments were found to be out of the required TS tolerance. Unit 2 declared a NOUE at 4:03 p.m., after commencing a reactor shutdown.

At the time of the shutdowns, the power grid was stable, with no power generation capacity shortages present, and the licensee had determined that sufficient numbers of operators were on site to conduct a safe and simultaneous shutdown of both units. The licensee did not believe that a safety basis existed to justify requesting regulatory relief from the TS requirements while the lengthy channel calibrations were performed.

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Both units exited the NOUE at 1:30 a.m. on January 13, 1993, after reducing reactor coolant system pressure to below the P11 setpoint (1975 psig), which permitted exiting TS 3.0.3. More instrument calibration is required prior to the licensee being in a position for restart.

Both units are presently in Mode 3, while the instrument calibration continues. The licensee has not firmly established a restart schedule for either unit.

The licensee has issued a press release.

The state of Texas has been informed.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the resident inspector at approximately 4:40 p.m. on January 12, 1993. Region IV has informed the EDO, NRR, and PA offices.

This information has been confirmed with a licensee representative.

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