

April 28, 1988

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-88-29

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: Omaha Public Power District
Fort Calhoun Station
Fort Calhoun, Nebraska
50-285

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

SUBJECT: INSTRUMENT AIR SYSTEM COMPONENTS OUTSIDE OF DESIGN BASIS

On April 15, 1988, the licensee identified a condition that appeared to be outside the design basis of the plant. The condition was related to the air-operated bubblers that are used to monitor the level of the safety injection and refueling water tank (SIRWT). There are four channels of level sensing for the SIRWT level. The bubblers sense the level in the SIRWT, and when the level reaches approximately 16 inches during injection from the tank to the reactor coolant system via the safety injection system, the suction of the safety injection pumps is automatically switched from the SIRWT to the containment sump.

The four bubblers, one for each channel of level sensing, are equipped with accumulators that provide a source of backup air in the event the normal air supply, from the instrument air system, is lost. Each accumulator assembly is equipped with a check valve to ensure the accumulator is not depressurized if system air pressure is lost.

The licensee performed a leak test on the four check valves in the accumulator assemblies and found that the check valves leaked excessively; therefore, the accumulators could not perform their design basis function of maintaining air pressure for a period of 12 hours as recently analyzed by the licensee as part of an Operational Safety Analysis Report 87-10. Upon loss of air pressure, these level indicators fail low thus initiating a recirculation actuation signal (RAS). If this were to occur during the critical injection phase, the suction for all the safety injection pumps would shift to a dry containment sump.

The licensee, in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 50.72, notified the HQ Duty Officer at 3:39 p.m. (CDT) on April 15, 1988. The licensee also notified the resident inspector.

In response to the condition discussed above, the licensee replaced the check valve in each accumulator assembly. The check valve was tested prior to installation to verify leak tightness. The licensee completed installation of the check valves at 12:15 a.m. (CDT) on April 16, 1988, and returned the accumulator assemblies to their normal line up.

RIV:DRP
LJCallan:gb
4/18/88

RA
RDMartin
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Neither the licensee nor the NRC plans to issue a press release.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by the HQ:DO at 4:39 p.m. on April 15, 1988. Region IV has informed (EDO/NRR/PA).

This information has been confirmed with a licensee representative.

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5520: 4/18/88 @ 3:308
REGIONS & HQ