

May 5, 1988

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-88-37

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: Louisiana Power and Light Company  
Waterford 3 Steam Electric Station  
Taft, Louisiana  
DN: 50-382

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

SUBJECT: EXPLOSION AND FIRE AT SHELL OIL COMPANY REFINERY, NORCO, LOUISIANA

At 3:36 a.m., CDT, on May 5, 1988, the catalytic cracking unit at the Shell Oil Company Refinery in Norco, Louisiana exploded into flames. The refinery is about 3½ miles east of Waterford 3, on the other side of the Mississippi River. The explosion was felt by control room personnel, and was described as similar to that felt when the main steam isolation valves shut. No safety systems were challenged. The plant is currently in its second refueling outage with fuel assemblies being loaded into the core. A walkdown of primary coolant boundaries was conducted and no apparent damage was found. The seismic recorders turned on, but no seismic alarms tripped. The smoke cloud from the fire travelled from the refinery southward, this was about 5 miles east, placing Waterford 3 in a favorable, upwind position. The licensee did not declare an unusual event because of the marginally remote location of the explosion, however, the NRC headquarters duty officer and the NRC residents were informed by 4:00 a.m., CDT. The senior resident inspector was about 1 mile west of the explosion when it occurred, and was awakened as all windows, sliding doors and front door were blown into his apartment. No injuries were sustained.

The licensee does not plan to issue a press release at this time.

Neither the licensee nor the NRC plan to issue a press release.

The state of Louisiana is aware of this event.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by the licensee and the senior resident inspector at 4:16 a.m., CDT on May 5, 1988. Region IV has informed NRR.

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5520: 5/1/88 @ 12:15 p  
 REGIONS & HQ