

September 23, 1988

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-88-78

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 Co.  
South Texas Project, Unit 1  
Bay City, Texas  
DN: 50-498

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

SUBJECT: PLANNED OUTAGE TO INSPECT BOTTOM MOUNTED INSTRUMENT (BMI) TUBES

At approximately 6 p.m. (CDT) on September 23, 1988, Houston Lighting & Power Company (HL&P) plans to begin a scheduled outage to inspect the BMI tubes at South Texas Project, Unit 1 (STP-1). During the outage, which is anticipated to last 14 days, HL&P will conduct eddy current tests on the BMI tubes to determine wear.

On May 6, 1988, HL&P reported that a review of eddy current test data on the 58 bottom mounted instrument thimble tubes at STP-1 revealed wear on 19 thimble tubes. Significant wear (greater than 25 percent of the wall thickness) was found on five thimble tubes. The significant wear was in the area of the flow limiters and ranged from 28 percent to 59 percent. An additional 14 thimble tubes exhibited wear as follows: 5 - 12 percent, 2 - 15 percent, 1 - 16 percent, 5 - 20 percent, and 1 - 25 percent. The minimum detectable wear is 10 percent.

These thimble tubes allow neutron detectors to be inserted into the reactor core to provide a detailed map of core power. Flow induced vibrations are believed to cause thimble tube wear which could lead to leakage of reactor coolant into the containment sump.

During the outage, HL&P will also install manual isolation valves on the thimble tubes and conduct other routine maintenance and surveillance testing activities.

Preoperational testing continues at South Texas Project, Unit 2 (STP-2). STP-2 is approximately 98 percent complete and HL&P appears to be on schedule for a projected fuel loading in December 1988.


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

This information has been confirmed with a licensee representative.

The state of Texas will be informed.

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RIV:D:DRP  
\*LJCallan;df  
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5520: 9/13/38 @ 11:25 a.m.  
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