

Advance Copy

POB: per J. Rath, etc

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-V-90-01 Date 01/02/90

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by Region V staff on this date.

FACILITY: ARIZONA NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT
PALO VERDE UNIT 3
DOCKET NO. 50-530
WINTERSBURG, AZ.

Emergency Classification
☐ Notification of Unusual Event
☐ Alert
☐ Site Area Emergency
☐ General Emergency
☒ Not Applicable

Rec'd 1/3/90
@ 11:15 a.m.

SUBJECT: MAIN TRANSFORMER FAULT

On December 30, 1989 while at 12% reactor power with the main generator supplying power to the grid, the Palo Verde Unit 3 phase "A" main transformer experienced what appears to be an internal fault at 4:30 pm (MST). Unit 3 was being returned to power operation following its first refueling (extended) outage. The internal fault apparently caused excessive internal pressure within the phase "A" transformer, splitting several seams in the housing and draining or spraying out all of the internal oil causing smoke to come from the transformer. One of two main transformer ceramic insulator bushings cracked, and a surge capacitor bank inside the turbine building was damaged.

The fault caused an immediate trip of the main generator output breakers and the reactor was stabilized at approximately 10% power. Site fire protection personnel responded and activated the transformer deluge system in addition to forcing water and foam into an opening in the upper section of the transformer housing. Smoke and an occasional flame were seen emanating from the transformer. The licensee declared the fire out within 10 minutes and therefore did not declare an Unusual Event.

Although at Units 1 and 2 some non-safety-related alarms came in and some non-safety-related equipment tripped due to a momentary undervoltage condition caused by the grid disturbance, there was no impact to any safety-related electrical busses or equipment. Unit 3 was returned to Mode 3 at 1:20 am (MST) on December 31, 1989.

The licensee intends to move the phase "A" transformer to a location onsite where it can be disassembled and inspected to determine the causes for failure. In parallel, the licensee is replacing the damaged transformer with a spare located onsite.

A similar event occurred at Unit 1 in July, 1988, when the auxiliary transformer which supplies 13.8KV power from the main generator to plant non-safety-related busses exploded while Unit 1 was at 100% power. This auxiliary transformer was of a different design and manufacturer than that of the main transformer involved in the event of December 30, 1989. The cause of that event was an internal fault in the transformer.

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PDR I&E
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The licensee has issued a press release.

This information is current as of 10:00 am, January 2, 1990

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LICENSEE

RESIDENT INSPECTOR

HQS. OPERATIONS OFFICER

PDR (202)634-3343

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RV FORM 211

Revised: 8/19/87