

Date: July 1, 1993

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PN39338

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 III staff on this date.

Facility:

Consumers Power Company
Palisades Nuclear Power Station
Covert, Michigan

Licensee Emergency Classification

General Emergency
 Site Area Emergency
 Alert
 Unusual Event
 N/A

*PDI - advance
by per:
J. Rathje*

Docket No. 50-255

Subject: HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE OBJECT FOUND IN REFUELING AREA

On July 1, 1993, the licensee discovered a highly radioactive object on the floor of the upender-tilt pit in the refueling area of the containment. Refueling had been completed, the reactor head had been placed on the vessel, and the refueling area was being decontaminated and drained at the time.

The object, which is about 6 feet long and 1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter, has not been identified. The radiation measurements on the object were 6,000 to 8,000 rems per hour at contact and 200 rems per hour at a distance of 1 foot. It is currently covered with several feet of water and radiation levels are slightly elevated above normal background levels. There have been no radiation overexposures as a result of this event.

A conference call was conducted between the NRC and the licensee at 1 p.m. (EDT) on July 1, 1993, to discuss the facts surrounding the event. Based on the measured radiation levels and initial review of video taken of the upender-tilt pit area, the licensee believes that the object may be a portion of a fuel rod. However, more investigative efforts are necessary before that assessment can be confirmed. The licensee has temporarily stopped all activities associated with reactor head installation and in the spent fuel pool to focus on the identification and recovery of the object. The licensee will review its recovery plans with the NRC before beginning recovery of the object.

The resident inspection staff is monitoring the licensee's activities. A Region III (Chicago) radiation specialist has been dispatched to the Palisades site.

The State of Michigan will be notified. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with the licensee.

Region III was notified of this event by the resident inspection staff at 7:40 a.m. (EDT) on July 1, 1993. This information is current as of 2:30 p.m. (EDT) on July 1, 1993.

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