

August 15, 1989

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-89-51

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 Company
South Texas Project, Unit 1
DN: 50-498

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

SUBJECT: RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION OUTSIDE RADIATION CONTROLLED AREA

During a routine radiological survey of the radiation controlled area (RCA), within the mechanical auxiliary building, Houston Lighting & Power Company found contamination in a stairwell. The stairwell was near normally noncontaminated auxiliary condensate piping associated with the radwaste evaporator. Further survey found the auxiliary condensate piping contaminated.

The apparent cause is associated with operation of the radiological waste evaporator. It appears that a valve lineup problem resulted in reactor coolant draining to the inorganic basin located outside the power block but inside the protected area. The inorganic basin can be pumped to the neutralization basin, also in the protected area. The neutralization basin is the final point before water is released to the HL&P controlled reservoir. Samples from the inorganic basin have shown 10^{-6} uCi/ml I-131 and 10^{-4} uCi/ml Co-58. These levels are below the limits for restricted areas per 10 CFR 20, Appendix B. These levels were from unprocessed RCS water removed from the plant during shutdown and following a planned crud burst. No contamination was found in the neutralization basin. The licensee has taken steps to preclude any discharges from either basin until this event is fully assessed. No personnel were contaminated.

Three Region-based inspectors, including an HP inspector, are onsite monitoring licensee activities.

The licensee has not issued a press release, but is prepared to respond to news media inquiries.

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

The state of Texas will be informed.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence by the resident inspector at 7:30 a.m. (CDT). Region IV has informed EDO/NRR/PA.

This information has been confirmed with a licensee representative.

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PNO-IV-89-051 PDC

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8/15/89

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INPO

(5520: 8/1/89 @ 1:45 p.m.
Regions & HQ)

PDR
NSAC
RRI

NRC Ops Ctr
Licensee (Reactor)