

**List of Leaks and Spills at Operating U.S. Commercial Nuclear  
Power Plants October, 2021**

**Introduction**

This is a list of operating reactor sites that experienced a radioactive leak or spill to the onsite owner controlled area where the concentration of tritium in the leak source, or in a groundwater sample exceeded 20,000 pCi/L at some time since initial startup. A tritium concentration of 20,000 pCi/L is used as the threshold for inclusion in the list because it is the drinking water standard in EPA's Safe Drinking Water Act. This version updates the October 2020 list of leaks and spills.

**Source of Information**

Recent information was compiled by NRC staff based on input from the nuclear power plant staff, Annual Radioactive Effluent Release Reports and Annual Radiological Environmental Operating Reports (see the NRC's web site for each site's detailed annual reports at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/tritium/plant-info.html>). Historical information is based on Annual Radioactive Effluent Release Reports, Annual Radiological Environmental Operating Reports, Groundwater Questionnaires, Preliminary Notifications, Event Notifications, Licensee Event Reports, NRC Inspection Reports, Special Reports, and other documents submitted by the licensees to the NRC.

**Contents**

After a radioactive leak or spill, tritium is generally the first radionuclide to be identified in groundwater. This is because tritium travels as a form of water through the soil faster than other radionuclides. The tritium concentrations for each plant documented in the list below consist of (1) the historical maximum concentration and (2) the "current" concentration. These values provide a reasonable approximation of the magnitude and extent of the historical leaks and spills as well as the current conditions.

The value listed as the "Historical Maximum Concentration of Tritium in a Leak Source or in a Groundwater Sample" is an approximation of the historical maximum tritium concentration from abnormal releases in which tritium from reactor operations contacted the onsite soil since initial startup. The timeframe in which the historical maximum tritium releases occurred is listed next to the maximum concentration value.

The value listed as the "Current Maximum Groundwater Sample Tritium Concentration" is a reasonable approximation of the current maximum tritium concentrations based on reported abnormal releases to onsite groundwater, or groundwater samples that have been collected and analyzed by the licensee. If a value has not been updated from the one listed in the previous version, it indicates the value continues to be a good approximation of the current conditions.

As documented in the licensee annual reports, groundwater samples were collected from onsite locations and analyzed including both drinking water wells and non-drinking water sample points (e.g., groundwater monitoring wells, storm drains, man holes, bore holes, piezometer tubes, surface water, puddles, and rain water). Although some values in the list exceed 20,000 pCi/L, none of those samples were collected from a drinking water well or from a municipal drinking water system. None of the samples collected from drinking water wells and municipal drinking water systems have ever exceeded the EPA drinking water standard of 20,000 pCi/L.

## **Summary**

There are 55 nuclear power plant sites in the United States that are currently operating. Historical records indicate 38 of these sites have at one time or another had leaks or spills that involved tritium concentrations greater than or equal to 20,000 pCi/L. Seven sites are currently reporting tritium in groundwater, from a leak or spill, in excess of 20,000 pCi/L. No site is currently detecting tritium in groundwater in the offsite environment, or in drinking water, in excess of 20,000 pCi/L. Tritium rapidly disperses and dissipates in the environment, and as a result, tritium from leaks and spills is typically not detected outside the facility boundary.

## **List of Historical Leaks and Spills at Operating U.S. Commercial Nuclear Power Plants**

It is important that the preceding paragraphs accompany any reproduction of this list so that the information is communicated in the proper context.

October, 2021 Updates

Plant	Historical Maximum Concentration of Tritium in a Leak Source or in a Groundwater Sample, pCi/L	Timeframe of Historical Maximum Concentration of Tritium in a Leak Source or in a Groundwater Sample, pCi/L	Current Maximum Groundwater Sample Tritium Concentration, pCi/L
Beaver Valley	25,583	September, 2010	4,220
Braidwood	247,000	1998	794
Browns Ferry	36,444	March, 2016	3,030
Brunswick	19,000,000	December, 2010	150,000
Byron	82,000	February, 2006	459
Callaway	1,600,000	July, 2014	794
Catawba	47,500	October, 2007	7,720
Columbia	270,000	March, 1993	11,000
Davis-Besse	37,500	October, 2008	660
Dresden	10,312,000	July, 2004	15,600
Fitzpatrick, J.A.	105,000	April, 2010	Not detectable
Ginna, R.E.	20,000	1995	347
Grand Gulf	2,240,000	March, 2014	3,920
Hatch, E.I.	6,840,000	September, 2011	1,700,000
Limerick	3,950,000	February, 2009	674
LaSalle	1,230,000	July, 2010	4,240
Millstone	4,000,000	November, 2007	5,030
Monticello	21,300	September, 2009	453
Nine Mile Point	44,000	August, 2012	242
North Anna	79,559	August, 2013	3,945
Oconee	45,000	December, 2011	4,600
Palisades	217,351	December, 2009	63,153
Palo Verde	4,200,000	March, 1993	Not detectable
Peach Bottom	196,000	March, 2010	7,970
Perry	59,900	2006	354
Quad Cities	7,500,000	2008	48,800

River Bend	1,135,000	February, 2013	400,000
Salem	15,000,000	April, 2003	60,500
Seabrook	750,000	1999	1,320
Sequoyah	25,060	2015	25,700
St. Lucie	161,000	2000	2,570
Summer	23,000	July, 2011	935
Surry	31,900	October, 2007	9,630
Susquehanna	>20,000	1995	202
Turkey Point	>20,000	1979	5,050
Vogle	>20,000	1990s	2,260
Waterford	22,000	1997	Not detectable
Watts Bar	550,000	February, 2005	2,660