

August 8, 2003

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-03-014

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 Region II staff (Atlanta, Georgia) on this date.

Facility

Southern Nuclear Company
Vogtle Unit 2
Augusta, Georgia
Dockets/License: 50-425

Licensee Emergency Classification

	Notification of Unusual Event
	Alert
	Site Area Emergency
	General Emergency
X	Not Applicable

Subject: VOGTLE UNIT 2 SHUTDOWN TO INVESTIGATE AND REPAIR MECHANICAL SEAL LEAK ON REACTOR VESSEL HEAD

At 8:00 p.m., EST on August 7, 2003, the licensee shutdown the Unit 2 reactor due to indications of an reactor coolant system (RCS) leak on or near the reactor vessel head.

On August 8, 2003, following the shutdown, the licensee conducted a visual inspection of the reactor vessel head inside the integrated head package and identified leakage from at least one of the four Conoseals. The Conoseals are mechanical joints on four reactor vessel head penetration extensions that form the pressure boundary for the incore thermocouples. The licensee is cooling down the plant to inspect, clean and repair the mechanical joint.

Over the previous two weeks, the licensee investigated the cause of containment radioactive particulate air monitor alarms during routine swapping of control rod drive mechanism (CRDM) cooling fans. These fans are mounted on top of the integrated reactor vessel head package and remove heat from the top of the head. The licensee conducted several visual inspections inside containment which revealed the presence of a slight boron deposition adjacent to the reactor head cavity. Also, samples taken of the containment atmosphere revealed the presence of short lived radioisotopes and small concentrations of iron. While no active leak was visually identified, these findings confirmed the presence of an active RCS leak, most likely inside the integrated reactor vessel head package. Prior to and during the licensee's investigation, the RCS leak rate (~0.07 - 0.1 gpm) had remained well below the Technical Specification limit of 1 gallon per minute.

The NRC resident inspectors will continue to monitor the licensee's investigation and repair efforts.

Media inquiries have been made of the licensee, but the licensee has NOT issued a press release on this event.

The information presented herein has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 10:00 a.m., August 8, 2003.

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