

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-03-17

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
Waynesboro, Georgia
Dockets/License: 50-425, NPF-81

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

Subject: Shutdown to Investigate & Repair Reactor Vessel Head Leak

At 9:00 p.m., EST on August 29, 2003, the licensee shutdown the Unit 2 reactor due to indications of a reactor coolant system (RCS) leak on or near the reactor vessel head. Following the shutdown, the licensee conducted a visual inspection of the reactor vessel head and identified leakage from the lower canopy seal weld for Conoseal #77. This weld provides additional sealing where the conoseal assembly is threaded onto the reactor vessel head penetration and is not considered an RCS pressure boundary. The licensee proceeded to cold shutdown and installed a vendor-provided canopy seal clamp around the weld.

Over the previous two weeks, following restart from a previous conoseal clamp leak repair outage, the licensee had investigated the cause of containment radioactive particulate air monitor alarms. The licensee conducted visual inspections of accessible areas inside containment which did not reveal the source of the leakage. However, samples taken of the containment atmosphere revealed the presence of short lived radioisotopes indicating the presence of an active RCS leak, most likely on the reactor vessel head. Prior to and during the licensee's investigation, the RCS leak rate (~0.05 - 0.1 gallon per minute) 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., September 2, 2003.

CONTACT: Brian Bonser
404-562-4540