

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION - REGION III

August 20, 2012

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE - PNO-III-12-009A

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. Some of the information may not yet be fully verified or evaluated by the Region III staff.

Facility

Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant
Northern States Power Co.
Monticello, MN
Docket: 50-263
License: DPR-22

Licensee Emergency Classification

☐ Notification of Unusual Event
☐ Alert
☐ Site Area Emergency
☐ General Emergency
☒ Not Applicable

SUBJECT: UPDATE TO MONTICELLO SHUTDOWN DUE TO DRYWELL UNIDENTIFIED
LEAKAGE ABOVE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION LIMITS

DESCRIPTION:

On August 10, 2012, the licensee noted that the drywell unidentified leakage rate had increased from a nominal 0.2 gallons per minute to 8.4 gallons per minute, exceeding the Technical Specification limit of 5 gallons per minute. The leakage rate then dropped to < 0.5 gallons per minute after about 15 minutes. The licensee reduced reactor power to 10 percent and remained at this power while workers entered the drywell to identify the source of the leakage. The leakage was coming from a mechanical bolted connection on a section of piping associated with the residual heat removal system. Subsequently, on August 14, 2012, at 12:00 p.m. CDT, the plant was shutdown to commence repairs.

The Technical Specification limit for unidentified leakage allows time for early detection of a problem that could indicate a failure of the reactor pressure boundary. The limit requires that the plant be shut down if the unidentified leakage rate exceeds 5 gallons per minute and cannot be reduced to below the limit within 4 hours or if there is any indication of pressure boundary leakage. As stated above, the unidentified leakage rate dropped below the Technical Specification limit within 15 minutes.

The licensee subsequently identified that the short term spike in the leakage rate was the result of a malfunctioning drain on a cooling unit near the leaking flange. The licensee estimated that the actual leak from the flange was about 0.5 gallons per minute. The drain was restored to working status and the mechanical bolted connection was repaired; in neither case was the leakage considered pressure boundary leakage.

Monticello was restarted on August 18, 2012. The resident inspectors observed the equipment repairs and the plant restart.

This preliminary notification is issued for information only. State and local officials have been informed. The site issued a press release on August 14, 2012, describing the event.

The information presented herein has been discussed with the licensee, and is current as of 9:00 a.m. CDT, on August 21, 2012.

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