

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

May 9, 2013

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE - PNO-III-13-004A

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

Palisades Nuclear Plant
Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.
Covert, Michigan
Docket: 05000255

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: UPDATE: PALISADES SHUTDOWN DUE TO SAFETY INJECTION
REFUELING WATER STORAGE TANK (SIRWT) LEAKAGE

This Preliminary Notification updates information provided in PNO-III-13-004, which discussed Palisades plant shutdown on May 5, 2013. Operators shut down the plant after they discovered SIRWT leakage of about 90 gallons per day (gpd) while monitoring the tank. This exceeded the 38 gpd limit to shut down that was established in the NRC's confirmatory action letter (CAL EA 12-155; ADAMS No. ML12199A409). About 80 gallons of low radioactivity water spread onto the roof, down roof drains, into drains that go to Lake Michigan. The released radioactivity to Lake Michigan is below regulatory limits and did not impact the safety of plant workers or the public.

Update: The plant was shut down safely and remains in a stable, cold shutdown, condition. Operators cooled down the plant to less than 200°F. Below this temperature, the SIRWT is not required to support the emergency cooling function for the reactor. The licensee is establishing conditions to empty the tank, evaluate the leak mechanism, and conduct repairs. A region-based NRC specialist in material engineering will also enter the tank as part of NRC inspections.

The NRC also continues to investigate the leakage to ensure there is a full understanding of the issue. Additional NRC inspectors are reviewing the radiological aspects of the incident and licensee response. The amount of radiation to a member of the public from the 80-gallon spill is estimated to be less than 0.002 millirem, with the federal limit to a member of the public being 100 millirem. Thus, the estimated release constitutes less than one-fifty thousandth (1/50,000) of the federal limit. NRC radiation exposure limits are based on the best available international scientific research and continue to be reviewed when new information comes to light. There is no negative health impact anticipated at or below the limit.

The NRC has responded to questions and comments from dozens of citizens and media representatives who are concerned about this issue, and we appreciate the opportunity to engage with members of the public. To that end, we are planning to host a webinar on May 23 to talk about how the NRC regulates releases from nuclear plants. A meeting notice will be issued shortly.

There is no threat to public health and safety.

The State of Michigan has been notified.

The information in this preliminary notification is current as of 15:00 p.m. EDT on May 9, 2013.

This information has been reviewed with plant management.

ADAMS Accession Number: ML13129A438

Contacts: John B. Giessner
630-829-9619
John.Giessner@nrc.gov

Thomas Taylor
269-764-8971
Thomas.Taylor@nrc.gov