

Observer
Observation Post

Walter Conklin
Peekskill Police Department
2 Nelson Avenue
Peekskill, New York
7:55 am until 1:55 pm

7:55 Arrive at Police Station and identify myself in the lobby. I am told I will be taken inside when something happens "necessitating action."

8:10 Taken inside by Police Commissioner Walter Kirkland who is also Civil Defense Director. He pointed out the equipment:
-terminal linked to Indian Point
-red Hotline phone attached to a speaker
All announcements during the day came over this equipment.
-radio tuned to WLNA
-multichannel radio
-backup radio manned by ham amateur volunteer

8:20 Rockland County is heard asking for a weather report from the state warning point. Weather is given: Wind 1.8 meters/second from 080° stability class "C"

8:29 Hotline : "Emergency classification Alert"

8:34 Hotline: wind given again: no change, general weather cloudy.

8:45 Officer answers phone in training room and repeats to the caller the announcement heard over hotline at 8:34

9:10 Commissioner Kirkland brings in news that County Exec had ordered all schools closed. Asked if the message came over the hotline. Ans: "No."

9:18 Telephone line to Peekskill Fire Station is out. Man sent to check power up on the hill.

9:19 Commissioner Kirkland explains that in a real emergency the procedures to close the schools would now be in effect.

9:21 Officer announces that there is a projected wind change due at 10:00 to 160°

9:23 Hotline: "Projected wind change to 160°. At 10:00. General weather clear."

9:32 Intervenor observer asked for name and address for Police log of exercise.

9:37 Hotline: "Condition at Indian Point changed to site area emergency. Wind speed now 2.7 meters/second from 160°."

- 9:50 Mayor George Pataki arrives and given a tour by Commissioner Kirkland. Announcement that Con Edison is evacuating non-essential personnel from Unit 2. The officers were not fully informed as to which emergency classification level was the trigger for the sirens.
- Sirens sound
- 9:53 Commissioner explains to Mayor that he would now be giving the Mayor an update in a real emergency.
- 9:55 Radiological officer explains his weather watching procedure to Mayor Pataki at the wall with a large map.
- 9:56 -
10:01 Discussion between Commissioner, Mayor, and City Manager about chain of command in actual evacuation process. Commissioner goes over some steps of the evacuation procedure including
- calling extra outside police and who would pay for it (agreement: not Peekskill)
 - sending all cars with loudspeakers out to alert all the people.
- Mayor asks what would happen if the emergency occurs at 3:00 am and all the people working at the station are at home. Commissioner answers that they would use the recall procedure used during the blackout.
- 10:14 Hotline: Weather announcement. Anticipated wind conditions at 14:00 hours given.
- 10:25 Commissioner announces that at this point the city water supply would be shut down by the Peekskill water commissioner under orders from the Peekskill Department of Public Works as the plume would contaminate the water supply.
- 10:40-
10:56 Mayor Pataki tells observer he is satisfied with the operation. He reiterates the different systems they have: hotline, apple computer, multichannel radio, back-up radio. He informs me that Peekskill has the authority to order its own evacuation but not to countermand a County-ordered evacuation. He is concerned over whether in the event of a large scale evacuation there will be enough buses to evacuate all the people from Peekskill who don't have cars. The Peekskill Parks Commissioner has ordered the evacuation of all city parks. He is expected to issue a statement.
- 10:58 Hotline: "County declared state of emergency. No radiological indication of danger." Radiation officer explains again how he analyzes weather. Parks commissioner arrives to report on evacuation of parks.
- 11:07 Precautionary sheltering and/or evacuation being considered

11:22 Catered food brought in, paid for by the State under some rule I can't catch.

11:33 Hotline: "Still site area emergency. Conditions deteriorating.

11:37 Hotline: "Precautionary evacuation of certain "ERPAs" recommended and precautionary sheltering of others, at the discretion of local authorities."

11:47 Hotline: "State of NY ordered evacuation of Rockland County."

11:49 Mayor orders evacuation of Peekskill.

11:58 Hotline: Announcement begins as site area emergency but is changed to general emergency.

12:06 Hotline: Announcement of estimated release of radioactivity and full body doses.

12:13 Hotline: Ground release of radiation given, as of 12:01 pm.

12:20 Instructions spread to take iodine pills.

12:33 County order to Peekskill to close down their water supply (see 10:25)

12:40 Radiological officer briefs city manager on progress of plume and amount of radiation in the air. If people are still on the streets the advisability is to shelter indoors rather than trying to evacuate.

12:52 Still a general emergency. Radioactive release continues. Areas that had been recommended to take shelter are now recommended to evacuate.

1:01 Mayor says that at this point everything would be closed down, all people out of Peekskill leaving Peekskill under the National Guard.

1:01-
1:55 During this last hour, most officers left and a couple returned to their regular duties. I did not hear any more official emergency messages over the hotline loudspeaker. Mayor Pataki left about 1 pm. While he was there he had quickly briefed me from time to time. I could only hear firsthand what came over the hotline loudspeaker, and general announcements, since I was not allowed to enter the equipment room but stood near the doorway inside the "training room." The equipment room is small so it is understandable why I was not allowed in, but the constant traffic and conversation in the training room hampered my ability to see and hear.