



UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

No. 79-66
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOTE TO EDITORS: The following was telephoned to the media at 12:15 a.m. on Thursday, March 29.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said tonight that its inspectors at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant in Pennsylvania have reported the temperatures continue to drop in the reactor where an accident occurred earlier today. However, temperatures have not dropped far enough to activate the normal decay heat removal systems.

Radiation levels within the containment building remain very high; one instrument indicates these levels are thousands of roentgens per hour inside at the containment ceiling.

There has been a continuing release to the atmosphere of detectable levels of radioactive gases. These releases apparently result from water on the floor of the auxiliary building. This water was pumped from the containment building. Measurements are being made by a helicopter tracking the air plume with special instruments. These measurements indicate that levels in the air have been about one-third of a milliroentgen per hour over the Harrisburg area. Ground level measurements at the Harrisburg airport, about two miles from the plant, showed 12 milliroentgens per hour. These levels are far below the 1000 milliroentgen level at which the Environmental Protection Agency recommends protective action.

Metropolitan Edison Company, operator of the plant, estimates that as many as eight workers received radiation exposures of one-half to one rem during the course of the day's activities. The annual exposure limit for radiation workers is five rem.

3/29 - 12:15 a.m.

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