PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-I-79-01

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information presented is as initially received without verification or evaluation and is basically all that is known by IC staff on this date.

Facility: Metropolitan Edison Company
Three Mile Island, Unit 2
Middletown, Pennsylvania
Docket Number 50-320

Subject: NATURAL CIRCULATION TRANSIENT

Between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on September 22, 1979, the first indications of anticipated natural circulation flow variations through the "A" loop steam generator were observed. This loss of stable natural circulation flow has been expected to occur as a result of diminishing heat input from the core. The "A" loop has been the primary means of decay heat removal since the onset of natural circulation on April 27, 1979. Prior to the transient the "A" loop differential temperature was 7.3°F with the "A" Hot Leg Temperature (T₄) at 157.8°F. The peak differential temperature (indicative of a lower than normal pretransient flow) was 18.9°F while the "A" loop T₄ peaked at 160.4°F. The 7.3°F "A" loop differential temperature re-established at approximately 2:00 a.m., September 23, 1979.

The highest reading inner thermocouple peaked at 237.3°F with a pretransient reading of 215.7°F. A similar but less noticeable transient occurred between 7:00 p.m., September 22, 1979, and 1:00 a.m. on September 24, 1979. These transients are expected to continue.

Public interest is expected because of continuing sensitivity to Three Mile Island activities. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was informed at 9:00 a.m., September 23, 1979. A press release is not planned by the licensee. NRC plans to respond to industries that may be generated by issuance of this PN.

Regional received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the NRC field representative at 1:00 a.m., late September 23, 1979.

This Preliminary notification is issued for information only. Licensee will provide detailed data obtained during the transient conditions. Licensee plans are to continue on-going decay heat, using stable natural circulation and steaming the reactor to maintain the core wetted.

Dennis H. Craig 215-1137 3, Hearing 215-1169 1, Lenton 215-1180

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION**

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