

Date: September 25, 1979

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-1-79-01

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 6:00 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 7.39F with the "A" Hot Leg Temperature (T_h) at 157.89F. The peak differential temperature (indicative of a lower than normal pretransient flow) was 15.99F while the "A" loop T_h peaked at 160.69F. The 7.39F "A" loop differential temperature re-established at approximately 2:00 a.m., September 23, 1979.

The highest reading incore thermocouple peaked at 237.89F with a pretransient reading of 236.79F. A similar but less noticeable transient occurred between 7:00 p.m., September 23, 1979, and 1:00 a.m. on September 24, 1979. These transients are expected to continue.

Media interest is expected because of continuing sensitivity to Three Mile Island activities. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was informed at 9:00 a.m., September 25, 1979. A press release is not planned by the licensee. NRC plans to respond to inquiries that may be generated by issuance of this PN.

Region 1 received notification of this occurrence by telephone from the NRC Resident Office at 10:00 a.m., September 24, 1979.

This preliminary notification is issued for information only. Licensee and NRC staff will continue to monitor the situation during the transient. Plans are to continue to monitor decay heat, using cyclic natural circulation and steaming the "A" loop steam generator.

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PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

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