

NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE--PNO-TMI-85-02

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

Facility: GPU Nuclear Corporation
Three Mile Island, Unit 2
Docket Number 50-320

Licensee Emergency Classification:
 X Not Applicable

Subject: TMI-2 CORE DAMAGE

On Wednesday, February 20, 1985, GPU Nuclear was able to guide a small television camera and light to the lower reactor vessel head and examine a small region below the core support structure. The television pictures revealed rubble which had the appearance of a gravel pile with some of the pieces being "fist" size and several inches across. The size of the gravel pieces were compared to the diameter of the light fixture and appear to be nominally three to four inches long and about half as wide. Further examinations on Thursday, February 21, 1985, revealed similar type material located at the periphery of one of the six inch diameter flow holes in the diffuser plate of the core support assembly. The examinations performed on February 21, 1985, support the concept that melting has occurred in the core area. The material composition of the rubble pile has not yet been determined. The rubble appears to be several inches deep in the lower reactor vessel head area.

In a separate effort, EG&G Idaho, Inc., under contract to DOE, has an ongoing program of examination of a limited number of fuel particles previously removed from the reactor. Recent results from these examinations indicate that temperatures of approximately 5100°F were reached in at least one region during the 1979 accident which would allow melting of the uranium dioxide fuel.

The licensee is continuing to explore the lower reactor vessel head area using television cameras.

Media interest has occurred because the licensee has issued a press release. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was informed.

This information is current as of 8:30 AM, February 22, 1985.

This preliminary notification is issued for information only and the NRC plans to continue monitoring events as they occur.

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