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NRC SENDS INSPECTOR TO KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY AFTER TORNADO DAMAGES RESEARCH REACTOR BUILDING

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission sent a reactor inspector to Kansas State University Thursday after a tornado damaged the building housing the university's research reactor. The reactor was not operating at the time, and initial surveys by the licensee showed no radiation leak and no apparent damage to the reactor.

The twister hit the KSU campus, in Manhattan, Kans., shortly after 11 p.m. Central Daylight Time June 11, damaging the siding and roof of the reactor building and cutting power to the building and its security systems. The university posted security guards at the building until power was restored to the building's security system shortly before 5 a.m. local time.

NRC regulations require research reactor licensees to declare an alert – the highest of two emergency classifications for research and test reactors – whenever a reactor building suffers tornado damage. Once power was restored to the building's security system, the alert was canceled and security of the facility resumed its normal state.

An NRC resident inspector from the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant near Burlington, Kans., arrived at the KSU campus early Thursday and is conducting an initial inspection of the reactor. He will be joined by two inspectors from NRC headquarters in Rockville, Md.

The KSU research reactor is a 1,250 kilowatt TRIGA reactor. This type of reactor requires no active cooling. The reactor remains in a stable shutdown condition.

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