



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SENDS SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM TO SALEM NUCLEAR PLANT IN N.J.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission sent a team of specialists to Unit 1 at the Salem nuclear power plant to review the circumstances surrounding an apparent loss of reactor coolant system inventory control at the plant last week. The team began its work today at Salem 1 in Hancocks Bridge, N.J. The two Salem reactors and the adjacent Hope Creek plant are operated by PSEG Nuclear.

On Wednesday evening, Oct. 15, with the reactor shut down for a refueling outage, operators were conducting a routine evolution to lower reactor coolant system level in the pressurizer (diagram below) in preparation for Unit 1 refueling. Over the course of several hours, operators unknowingly used a level indication instrument that was not functioning properly to monitor water level. Once the problem was detected, operators added water back to the reactor coolant system and fixed the level indication instrument. The NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to Salem have been following-up on this event and reviewing other outage-related activities since last week.

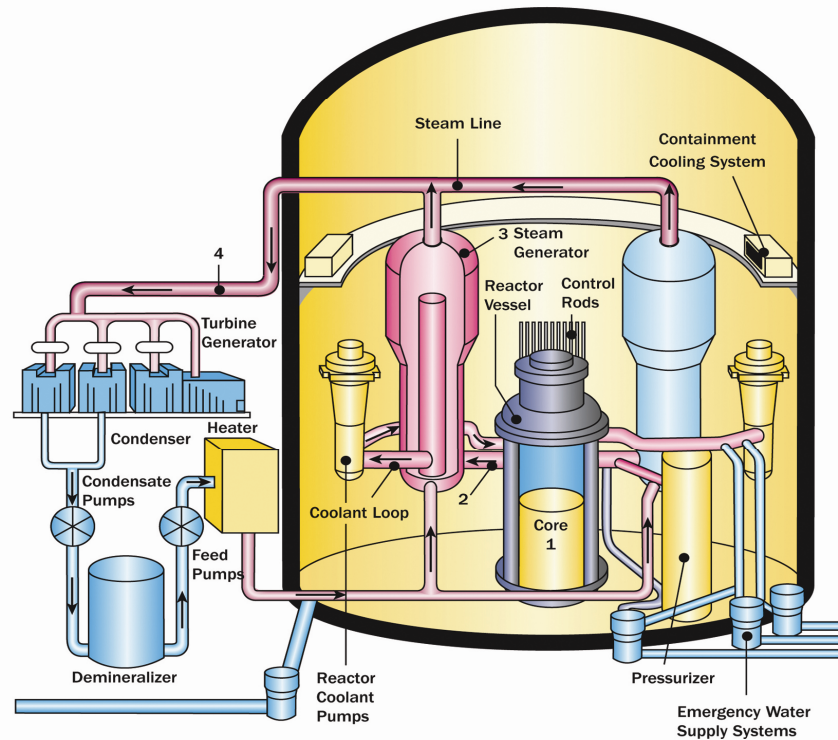
There was no danger to public health and safety or the environment. There was no release of radiation associated with this operational event.

The three-person inspection team will develop a sequence of events; review PSEG's control of risk-significant work including procedural guidance, pre-job briefs, and supervisory oversight; review equipment issues related to the pressurizer drain-down; and inspect PSEG's organizational response.

NRC Region I Administrator Sam Collins said, "Although this did not impact public safety, it is important that we have a thorough understanding of what happened and why it happened. The team will also look at the actions the company has taken to prevent similar issues in the future."

The team is expected to be on-site at least through the end of the week. An inspection report detailing the team's findings will be issued 45 days after the end of the inspection.

Typical Pressurized-Water Reactor



Source: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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