

April 10, 1997

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-III-97-031

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 Region III staff (Lisle, Illinois) on this date.

Facility
Commonwealth Edison Co.
Quad Cities 1 2
Cordova, Illinois
Dockets: 50-254,50-265

Licensee Emergency Classification
Notification of Unusual Event
Alert
Site Area Emergency
General Emergency
X Not Applicable

Subject: OUTAGE DUE TO INOPERABLE 4 KV BREAKERS

On April 1, 1997, the licensee identified fractures on an auxiliary switch contact block mounted on a 4 kV breaker prior to installation in a Unit 2 safety-related bus. The failure resulted in an auxiliary switch contact block physically separating from the support mount. The licensee inspected similar spare breakers and identified 12 of 14 breakers with cracked auxiliary switches.

On April 8, 1997, the licensee removed and replaced two residual heat removal service water (RHRSW) pump breakers in Unit 1 due to finding cracked switches. On April 9, 1997, the licensee declared all similar breakers of Merlin-Gerin origin inoperable. This caused all breakers in 4 kV busses 13, 14, 23, and 24 to be considered inoperable. That action rendered all RHRSW pumps and feeder breakers to the 1E busses inoperable (but functional) for both units.

The licensee commenced shutdown of Unit 1 on April 9, 1997, as required by Technical Specifications. Unit 2 is currently in a refueling outage. A manual trip of the Unit 1 reactor was inserted at 00:06 a.m. (CDT) on April 10, 1997. As of 10:16 a.m. on April 10, 1997, Unit 1 was in cold shutdown.

The Merlin-Gerin breakers (style AMGH-5-350-12) were distributed by Pacific Breakers and had been phased into use on both units in the past three years. The licensee also has used these breakers at the Dresden Nuclear Station, and is also evaluating these breakers. At present, the licensee has identified no significant problems with the breakers at Dresden.

The licensee is presently testing similar breakers and analyzing material in an offsite laboratory in an attempt to better understand the cause of the defect.

NRC resident inspectors observed the reactor shutdown activities. An NRC vendor inspection branch visit to the Quad Cities Nuclear Station is scheduled to begin April 14, 1997.

The States of Illinois and Iowa will be notified. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

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The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center at 1:37 p.m. (CDT) on April 9, 1997. This information is current as of 10:30 a.m. (CDT) on April 10, 1997.

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