NJ Nuclear Reactor Back Up After Leak Repaired

LOWER ALLOWAYS CREEK TOWNSHIP, N.J. (AP) — A nuclear reactor in southern New Jersey resumed operations Saturday after crews repaired a leak in the containment building that was discovered two days earlier.

Regulators say the spill was confined to the containment building, and there was never a threat to the public or workers. PSEG Nuclear says about 4,800 gallons of slightly radioactive water leaked out, and the water went through the plant's drain system as designed. The entire system holds 90,000 gallons.

The Salem Unit 1 in Lower Alloways Creek Township was manually shut down around 7:30 p.m. Thursday, after the water was discovered leaking at a rate of 4 gallons per minute. The initial investigation determined the leak came from a valve in the reactor coolant system.

PSEG Nuclear spokesman Joe Delmar told the South Jersey Times [1] the plant returned to service at 4:47 p.m. Saturday.

Neil Sheehan, spokesman for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, told the newspaper that the agency's resident inspectors assigned to the Salem plant were made aware of the situation and were on hand to witness the shutdown, which went smoothly. The valve that was leaking had been replaced during the last refueling outage at Salem 1 this spring, NRC officials said.

The neighboring Salem 2 and Hope Creek reactors were not affected by the shutdown and continued operating at full power.

The three reactors are operated by PSEG Nuclear at its Artificial Island complex in the township. They can produce enough electricity to power 3 million homes.

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Information from: South Jersey Times (Woodbury, N.J.), http://nj.com/southjerseytimes [2]

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