

Mar. 16, 2011

Low impact filtered water release to environment

[Pickering, ON]: On March 14 Pickering Nuclear had an unintended water release into the environment.

The event was a low level regulatory event with only negligible effect to the environment and no public health implications.

A pump seal failure at the Pickering Nuclear A station released an estimated 73,000 litres of filtered water to Lake Ontario on March 14. (This is a conservative estimated calculation for the maximum possible release.) The release was attributed to a faulty pump seal. The release was immediately stopped upon discovery and the pump seal is being replaced.

The filtered (demineralised) water contained trace amounts of tritium, far below any regulatory limits. Routine content of tritium in water at local water treatment plants is generally between six and 10 becquerels per litre some of which is naturally occurring in Lake Ontario and some from the nuclear station and other sources. The estimates of the maximum potential impact of this release means a tritium increase of .56 becquerels per litre, still well within normal range.

The provincial standard for tritium in drinking water is 7,000 becquerels per litre. All appropriate regulatory agencies and stakeholders were notified.

From a regulatory perspective, this is a very low level event. There is no impact to quality of drinking water.

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