

## Nuclear Disaster Readiness Drill Staged at Kashiwazaki Kariwa NPS

A comprehensive nuclear disaster readiness drill for FY2005 was staged by the government on November 9 and 10 at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Kashiwazaki Kariwa NPS. Under the Special Law of Emergency Preparedness for Nuclear Disaster, all parties related to nuclear power, including ministries and agencies of the national government, the Nuclear Safety Commission (NSC), local municipalities and companies engaged in nuclear businesses, must jointly carry out practical disaster readiness drills. About 2,500 people from local communities and related organizations participated in the drill.



METI Vice Minister Nishino (right) and Governor Izumida

The drill was undertaken over two days. The first day focused on working level personnel, and involved training in the notifications provided in Article 10 of the law, and establishment of an emergency system between Tokyo and the site. The second day (after an overnight break) turned to reporting on the emergency under Article 15 of the law, issuing emergency declarations, various first-aid measures and resolution, bringing the emergency office in the prime minister's official residence, relevant ministers and the governor into the process. An off-site center, the Kashiwazaki Kariwa Nuclear Disaster

Readiness Center, served as the main on-site training base. The central task force in Tokyo was linked to the various municipalities via a TV conferencing system, allowing it to give directions, information, technological advice, etc., and enabling smooth cooperation among them. Based on lessons from the Chuetsu Earthquake in Niigata last year, the focus of the drill was on transportation of isolated citizens, information activities using a simulated press room and reporters, and switching to satellite circuits in anticipation of disruption of communication lines.

The assumed event was that, on November 9, an alarm was triggered indicating leakage of reactor coolant in the reactor vessel at the Kashiwazaki Kariwa-4 NPS (BWR, 1,100MW), the reactor was manually shutdown, pressure inside the vessel continued to rise, and the Emergency Core Cooling System (ECCS) was activated. At 7:55 a.m. on November 10, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) received a report from the Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) that the ECCS had lost the ability to feed water because of a broken pump. METI determined the situation to be a nuclear emergency under Article 15 of the law, and, after reporting to the prime minister, a nuclear emergency was declared at 8:30 a.m. In response, the government's nuclear disaster task force headquarters, headed by the prime minister, was established, and METI Vice Minister Akira Nishino and Governor Hirohiko Izumida of Niigata Prefecture arrived at the off-site center. Concerted damage control efforts began in coordination with the joint committee for



disaster measures organized by the central government and local municipalities.

Fearing that the event could lead to damage to fuel cladding tubes and the release of substantial radioactive material into the environment, the task force headquarters decided at 10:25 a.m. to order residents in affected areas around the plant to evacuate or remain indoors. Defense Force vehicles started transporting evacuees.

At a press conference following the drill, Niigata Governor Izumida praised how the many organizations involved had worked together in organizing a network. Speaking from the point of view of a municipality that had experienced a large natural disaster, he also commented on the importance of disseminating information without stirring up fear among residents, and on the need for readiness in the case of a “compound disaster” – a nuclear disaster caused by an earthquake.



*Editor: Noriyuki Ishii, JAIF*