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Radioactive Releases Not Expected at Omaha Nuclear Power Plant

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Officials at the Omaha Public Power District say there have been no releases of radioactive material since flooding from the Missouri River caused them to declare a low-level emergency June 6 at the Fort Calhoun nuclear power plant.

The emergency level, declared as "a notification of an unusual event," is the lowest possible of four standard emergency classifications set by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and, as of now, there has been no risk to the public.

Officials say they have sandbagged the area surrounding the plant to a level greater than what the projected water levels will reach, and that they do not expect any release of radioactivity.

The four emergency classifications set by the NRC are listed below in order of increasing severity, according to the NRC website.

- **Notification of Unusual Event** - Under this category, events are in process or have occurred which indicate potential degradation in the level of safety of the plant. No release of radioactive material requiring offsite response or monitoring is expected unless further degradation occurs.
- **Alert** - If an alert is declared, events are in process or have occurred which involve an actual or potential substantial degradation in the level of safety of the plant. Any releases of radioactive material from the plant are expected to be limited to a small fraction of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) protective action guides (PAGs).
- **Site Area Emergency** - A site area emergency involves events in process or which have occurred that result in actual or likely major failures of plant functions needed for protection of the public. Any releases of radioactive material are not expected to exceed the EPA PAGs except near the site boundary.
- **General Emergency** - A general emergency involves actual or imminent substantial core damage or melting of reactor fuel with the potential for loss of containment integrity. Radioactive releases during a general emergency can reasonably be expected to exceed the EPA PAGs for more than the immediate site area.

For more information, visit <http://www.nrc.gov/>.

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