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## Japanese authorities order precautionary evacuation near nuclear plant

**(CNN)** -- Workers at a nuclear power plant in north-central Japan are having trouble cooling the reactor and authorities have asked nearby residents to evacuate, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said at a news conference.

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant was shut down after the earthquake that hit the country.

"This is a precautionary instruction for people to evacuate. There is no radioactive leakage at this moment outside of the facility," he said. "At this moment there is no danger posed to the environment."

Japan declared a state of atomic power emergency after the earthquake, the Kyodo News agency reported. The government is sending senior officials and the defense force's Chemical Corps to the power plant, it said.

Fire broke out at a second facility, the Onagawa plant, but crews were able to put that fire out, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Edano said workers at the Fukushima Daiichi plant were having trouble generating sufficient electricity to pump water into the cooling system. They were using all available backup electricity, he said.

"The emergency shutdown has been conducted but the process of cooling down the reaction is currently not going as planned," he said.

Residents living within a 3-kilometer radius of the plant were asked to evacuate, while residents living within a zone 3 to 10 kilometers away were asked to stay inside their homes.

About 2,000 people were affected by the evacuation order, according to the Kyodo News Service.

Edano urged people to remain calm, saying there is plenty of time to evacuate.

The plant was damaged by the 8.9-magnitude earthquake that has caused widespread destruction across the country.

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