

Nuclear regulator instructs TEPCO over water leaks

Japan's nuclear regulator has instructed the operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant to swiftly find the cause of radioactive water leaks from underground storage tanks there.

The move comes after the Tokyo Electric Power Company reported a massive leak of more than 120 tons of contaminated water from an underground storage tank last week. There was another report on Sunday of a small leak of up to 3 liters from different tank.

Toyoshi Fuketa, a member of the Nuclear Regulation Authority, summoned to his office Zengo Aizawa, a vice president of TEPCO on Monday.

Fuketa urged Aizawa to identify the cause of the leaks and their environmental impact, and to review TEPCO's storage system of tainted water.

Fuketa stressed the authority is taking the leaks seriously.

He said the existing tanks have to be used to store the contaminated water for the time being because of the current tank shortage. He urged the TEPCO executive to come up with a more secure plan to store radioactive water.

He also said he will consider expanding the authority's inspection staff at the Fukushima plant after the plant suffered a series of problems, including last month's power failure at the fuel pools.

Apr. 8, 2013 - Updated 07:53 UTC

