

TEPCO Releases Photos of Reactor Building Interiors, Confirming High Radiation Levels

In order to further determine conditions at its Fukushima Daiichi NPS, the Tokyo Electric Power Co., Inc. (TEPCO) recently deployed radio-controlled robots for the first time to inspect the reactor buildings of the plant's Units 1, 2 and 3, each of which contains high levels of radiation.

The interiors of Units 1 and 3 were inspected by the robots on April 17, and that of Unit 2 on April 18. At each unit, the pair of robots opened the two sequential doors on the first floor and entered the building, allowing operators to see the debris and other objects inside.

At Unit 1, the level of radiation was 49 mSv/hour right inside the first door, and 10 mSv/hour inside the second door. At Unit 3, the readings were 28 mSv/hour right inside the first door, and 57 mSv/hour inside the second – a rate that would exceed the limit of 250 mSv for workers during an emergency in just four and a half hours.

At Unit 2, the humidity was so high (94% to 99%) inside the second door that the robots, after capturing a dosimeter reading of 4.1 mSv near the entrance, could not continue because their camera lenses had fogged up.

Regarding the radiation figures, Deputy Director-General Hidehiko Nishiyama of Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) said that "there was no need to immediately change the prospects" for the work.



Radio-controlled robot opening the second door of the Unit 3 reactor building at the Fukushima Daiichi NPS (April 17, photo provided by TEPCO)



Robot advancing on the first floor of the Unit 1 reactor building (April 17, photo provided by TEPCO)

Editor: Hisako Sakurai, JAIF