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Water leak is cited at nuclear plant

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Water leaking from the reactor coolant system of Unit No. 2 at the Comanche Peak nuclear plant near Glen Rose early yesterday prompted officials to declare an "unusual event."

The leak sent Fort Worth area parents to the telephone to check on the safety of their children who are attending various camps in the area of the Somervell County plant. Jeff Williams, a dispatcher at the Somervell County Sheriff's Department, said he was "swamped" with about 30 calls from parents in the Fort Worth area concerned about children who are staying at camps in the area.

The Tarrant Baptist Encampment, Glen Lake Methodist Camp and Stephens Girl Scout Ranch are all within a five-mile radius of Comanche Peak, Williams said.

The leak was fixed and the "unusual event" ended at 1:05 p.m., TU Electric spokesman Jerry Lee said.

The leak was discovered at 5:15 a.m. at a seal injection filter connection to the reactor coolant pump. Unit No. 2 is in the early stages of testing, and Lee said the leaking water was not radioactive.

The leak amounted to 1.02 gallons of water per minute, Lee said.

The Nuclear Regulatory Agency requires that the plant declare an "unusual event" if the leakage is more than 1 gallon per minute, plant spokesman Mark Manroe said.

"It was water from the reactor core but it was not radioactive. It was clean water," Lee said.

"There was no threat to people or to the environment."

An unusual event is the lowest category of emergency at a nuclear power plant, according to NRC regulations, he added.

"When you put the words reactor and leak in the same sentence it's bound to alarm some people," Lee said.

This report contains material from The Associated Press.