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Radioactive water found near nuclear plant

PHOENIX Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station operators are conducting tests to make sure radioactive water discovered near the plant hasn't seeped into the area's water supply.

Arizona Public Service notified the Department of Environmental Quality and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of its discovery on Thursday.

Now, APS will work with state and federal officials to pinpoint the source of the contaminated water and determine how far it has spread.

The radioactive water was found by work crews this week near a maze of underground pipes at Palo Verde.

Initial tests confirmed the water contains more than three times the acceptable amount of tritium. However, state officials say there's no immediate evidence that the tritium poses any public health concerns.

Tritium is a byproduct of nuclear power generation and a relatively weak source of radiation. Small amounts of tritium pass through the body quickly, usually through urine. However, exposure to tritium can increase the risk of cancer and birth defects.

Information from: The Arizona Republic, <http://www.azcentral.com>

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