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Statements of NSC-Chairman vs NHK

Madarama: Plant guidelines should be fully revised

The chairperson of Japan's Nuclear Safety Commission, Haruki Madarama, has told NHK that the engineering guidelines for nuclear power plants should be thoroughly revised as they do not include the possibility of a long-term power failure.

The total blackout caused major damage at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami.

The guidelines were last modified by the commission in 1990.

They state that a long-term power failure can be ignored as emergency back-up systems are expected to supply electricity.

The complacency about blackouts has been pointed out as one of the causes of the severe accidents at the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

Madarama told NHK that the guidelines clearly state that a long-term power failure can be disregarded. He said he paid no attention to the explanation until the accidents and he regrets his lack of knowledge, adding that the guidelines should have included the worst-case scenario.

He said the guidelines were not revised because experts on nuclear power generation are an enclosed group and they tend to avoid vigorous discussions and uncomfortable subjects.

He concluded that the Fukushima accidents were caused by human error.