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High levels of cesium detected above No.1 reactor

The operator of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant says the density of radioactive cesium above the No.1 reactor is 18 times the permissible level for the edge of the plant's compound.

Large amounts of radioactive substances have been released into the air since reactor cores and buildings were damaged, but measurements were not available.

On Sunday, Tokyo Electric Power Company began measuring the density of radioactive elements above the No.1 and No.4 reactors.

The firm used instruments attached to the crane pumps that are injecting water into the reactors.

TEPCO detected 360 becquerels of cesium-134 per cubic meter above the No.1 reactor, where most of the fuel rods are believed to have melted. The amount is 18 times the allowable limit for the plant's perimeter.

The firm also discovered 7.5 times the limit of cesium-134 above the No.4 reactor, which has no fuel in its core. The substance is believed to have come from the fuel storage pool and the neighboring No.3 reactor.

TEPCO says it will measure the levels of radioactive elements above the No.2 and No.3 reactors. It also plans to cover the reactor buildings with polyester sheets to prevent the further dispersal of radioactive materials into the air.

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