

updated at 4:50 UTC, Apr. 06

7.5 mil. times legal limit of iodine in sea

The operator of the stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says 7.5 million times the legal limit of radioactive iodine 131 has been detected from samples of seawater near the plant.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, found on Saturday that contaminated water was leaking from a cracked concrete pit near the No. 2 reactor.

Experts say this makes it clear that highly radioactive substances from the reactor are flowing into the sea, and that the leak must be stopped as soon as possible.

The utility firm said samples of water taken near the water intake of the No. 2 reactor at 11:50 AM Saturday contained 300,000 becquerels of iodine 131 per cubic centimeter, or 7.5 million times the legal limit. TEPCO said the figure had dropped to 200,000 becquerels per cubic centimeter, or 5 million times the legal limit, in samples taken at 9:00 AM Monday.

Monday's sample also contained 1.1 million times the legal limit of cesium 137, which has a half life of 30 years.

On March 27th, 13-million becquerels of iodine 131 per cubic centimeter of water were detected in the turbine building of the No. 2 reactor. On Wednesday, water was found accumulated in a tunnel near the turbine building and the radiation level on the surface was measured at more than 1,000 millisieverts per hour.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency says it believes the radioactive substances are from nuclear fuel which leaked from the reactor into the water and flowed out.

Tuesday, April 05, 2011 15:10 +0900 (JST)