

# Chubu Electric halted Hamaoka No. 4 reactor

Sunday 15 May 2011, by [Kyodo News](#) (Date first published: 13 May 2011).

SHIZUOKA - Chubu Electric Power Co. on Friday successfully halted one of its two active reactors at the Hamaoka power plant in Shizuoka Prefecture, marking the first step in an unprecedented government-requested shutdown.

With the No. 4 reactor offline, the utility will move to halt the No. 5 unit on Saturday, which will close down the entire plant. The complex sits on a major active fault line.

After workers began inserting control rods into the No. 4 unit early Friday, the reactor stopped output at 10 a.m. and fission ended completely at 1:56 p.m.

Reactors 1 and 2 have already been shut down for decommissioning, while No. 3 has been suspended for regular checkups.

To meet summer demand for power without its only nuclear plant, the utility plans to reboot a suspended thermal power plant and ask customers to conserve electricity. The Hamaoka plant accounts for more than 10 percent of Chubu Electric's electricity supply.

The utility hopes to reactivate the plant in the Pacific Coast city of Omaezaki as soon as it builds additional breakwaters and takes other measures to protect against larger tsunami. However, Shizuoka Gov. Heita Kawakatsu remains cautious until safety can be fully assured.

The central government said it expects the plant to remain shut for two to three years.

Following the Fukushima nuclear crisis triggered by the March 11 mega-quake and tsunami, Prime Minister Naoto Kan made an unprecedented request a week ago to shut down the Hamaoka plant to prevent a widely expected quake from triggering another freak nuclear accident.

**Kyodo**, May 13, 2011

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\* Kyodo, May 13, 2011

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