

# Chronology Of Events Surrounding Crippled Fukushima Nuclear Plant

Tuesday 12 April 2011, by [Nikkei](#) (Date first published: 11 April 2011).

TOKYO (Kyodo)—The following is a chronology of events regarding the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station in Fukushima Prefecture, triggered by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami that struck northeastern and eastern Japan.

March 11 — Magnitude 9.0 earthquake forces power plant's Nos. 1-3 reactors to suspend operations automatically (Nos. 4-6 reactors were shut down, undergoing regular checks). Prime Minister Kan declares nuclear emergency, directing local residents in 3-kilometer radius of plant to evacuate.

March 12 — Kan inspects stricken plant. Radioactive steam is vented from No. 1 reactor's containment vessel. Hydrogen explosion rips No. 1 reactor building. Government expands evacuation zone to 20 km radius of plant.

March 14 — Hydrogen explosion rocks No. 3 reactor building. No. 2 reactor's fuel rods are exposed as water recedes inside reactor vessel.

March 15 — Kan scolds Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) officials at company head office. Explosion is heard near suppression chamber of No. 2 reactor's containment vessel. Explosion is also heard at No. 4 reactor. Government directs residents in 20-30-km ring of plant to stay indoors.

March 16 — Damage is feared to have been done to No. 3 reactor's containment vessel, forcing workers to retreat.

March 17 — Ground Self-Defense Force helicopters drop water on No. 3 reactor building. Fire engines spray water from ground.

March 18 — Nuclear safety agency gives crisis involving Nos. 1-3 reactors preliminary value of Level 5 on nuclear accident scale of 7.

March 19 — Tokyo firefighters spray water at No. 3 reactor. Government announces detection of radioactive materials in raw milk in Fukushima Prefecture and spinach in Ibaraki Prefecture above allowable levels.

March 20 — Nos. 5 and 6 reactors enter stable condition called "cold shutdown."

March 21 — Workers are evacuated from No. 3 reactor after smoke spews out.

March 22 — Large concrete pump drops water on No. 4 reactor.

March 23 — Elevated level of radioactive iodine is detected in water treatment plant in Tokyo, prompting metropolitan government to urge people not to give tap water to infants.

March 24 — Three workers are exposed to elevated levels of radiation at No. 3 reactor's turbine building. Metro government rescinds drinking restriction for infants.

March 25 — Government urges people living in 20-30-km ring of plant to evacuate on their own.

March 26 — Radioactive iodine is found in seawater near drainage for No. 1 reactor at 1,850 times allowable level.

March 27 — High levels of radioactive water are found in tunnels near turbine buildings for Nos. 1-3 reactors.

March 28 — Highly contaminated water is found in basement of No. 2 reactor's turbine building. TEPCO announces detection of plutonium on plant premises on March 21 and 22.

March 30 — TEPCO chairman Katsumata announces decommissioning of Nos. 1-4 reactors.

April 2 — Cracked pit near seawater intake for No. 2 reactor is found leaking water.

April 3 — TEPCO announces finding bodies of two workers at No. 4 reactor's turbine building on March 30 who were apparently killed in tsunami.

April 4 — TEPCO begins dumping relatively low-level radioactive water into sea.

April 5 — Radioactive material is found in young sand lance caught off Ibaraki Prefecture. TEPCO begins paying compensation money to municipalities facing evacuation directive.

April 6 — TEPCO says leaks of highly contaminated water into sea stopped. Work begins to put nitrogen gas into No. 1 reactor to prevent hydrogen explosion.

April 7 — Worst aftershock strikes Miyagi Prefecture, elsewhere.

April 10 — Work begins to remove rubble, possibly emitting radiation, on plant premises with remote-controlled heavy machines.

**The Nikkei**, Monday, April 11, 2011.

---

**P.S.**

\* From The Nikkei:

<http://e.nikkei.com/e/fr/tnks/Nni20110411D11JF550.htm>