

Nuclear plant shuts down unexpectedly in Washington state

May 18 2018

A nuclear power plant in southeastern Washington shut down unexpectedly Friday.

The Tri-City Herald reports the Columbia Generating Station's systems detected a problem having to do with electrical distribution and automatically shut the plant down at 6:51 a.m.

Authorities said there is no risk to the public.

The 1,207-megawatt plant is the only commercially operated nuclear power plant in the Pacific Northwest and produces enough electricity to power a city the size of Seattle.

Plant officials are investigating the issue, which involved the main transformer and the [electricity distribution](#) system, John Dobken said, spokesman for Energy Northwest.

The exact cause was not known.

"The plant responded as designed" and is stable, Dobken said.

The plant last had an unexpected shutdown in August after an air removal valve in the plant's turbine building closed.

Bonneville Power Administration, which distributes electricity from the [nuclear power plant](#), "is well positioned to respond to the loss of

generation," BPA spokesman Kevin Wingert said. "We are taking steps to ensure no impact to customers."

The [nuclear plant](#) is located about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of Richland, Washington.

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