

Overview of the Sodium Leak Accident at the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor

○ Overview of the accident

On December 8, 1995, while bringing the Monju Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor of the former Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) (now Japan Atomic Energy Agency) into operation, an accident occurred, resulting in a sodium leak.

The ensuing investigation found that sodium had leaked from a temperature gauge in the sodium line and the sodium reacted with oxygen in the air, resulting in a sodium fire.

○ Impact of the accident

However, the accident in the secondary main cooling system did not affect the public or nearby workers with radioactive materials. The nuclear reactor also shut down safely and the reactor core was unaffected.

However, sodium did leak and the sodium fire did in fact broaden the impact. And because the operator, PNC at the time, clearly mishandled informing the public, it made many people, especially those living in the region, worry and mistrustful.

