

Hurricane Florence: Sixty Foot Flood to Inundate Brunswick Nuclear Plant on Cape Fear River NC

By [Roy Morrison](#)

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On Saturday morning, CNN reports that National Weather Service forecast flood waters on Cape Fear River in Wilmington N.C. to crest at 60 feet (sixty feet) early next week. Wilmington is near Southport, home of two reactor Brunswick nuclear plant on the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. The nuclear plant has a sea wall designed to withstand 22 feet of flooding according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. On Saturday morning the river gage on Cape Fear River in Wilmington had reached 16 feet with forecast of rising rapidly to an astounding record sixty feet of flood crest early next week.

Heavy downpours continue as Florence moves very slowly to the south west. The wide Cape Fear River is a major channel for flood water runoff to reach the ocean.

A fifty to sixty flood inundating the plant will mean thirty to forty foot deep flood coursing through the plant. This is almost certain to knock out onsite emergency generators at the nuclear plant to cool the reactors. What stands between catastrophic nuclear disaster are additional pumps and additional backup generation installed after Fukushima.

The ability of the reactors to tolerate prolonged deep flood waters is unknown. It was reported that waterproof steel doors had been installed on seven key locations in anticipation of the storm.

The Brunswick reactors are the same GE Mark I reactors that are at Fukushima. It is highly likely that offsite power to the nuclear plant will be disrupted by hurricane Florence. In this case, onsite emergency generators will be required to maintain cooling systems for the nuclear plants and spent fuel ponds filed with highly radioactive waste.

If water overtops the seawall, it can lead to electrical failure and potential for catastrophic events similar to the Fukushima reactor disaster that resulted in multiple reactor meltdowns and hydrogen explosions in overheating reactors.

“We face imminent danger of nuclear catastrophe, now that the forecast is for a 60 foot flood crest at 22 foot sea wall at the Brunswick plant. All possible assistance shall be provided immediately to help prevent nuclear disaster,” said energy expert Roy Morrison.

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Roy Morrison's latest book is *Sustainability Sutra Select Books*, NY 2017. He builds solar farms.

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