

The Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident in Ukraine in April 1986 was caused by a faulty Soviet reactor configuration combined with significant plant operator errors. It was a direct result of the lack of some kind of safety and protection environment.

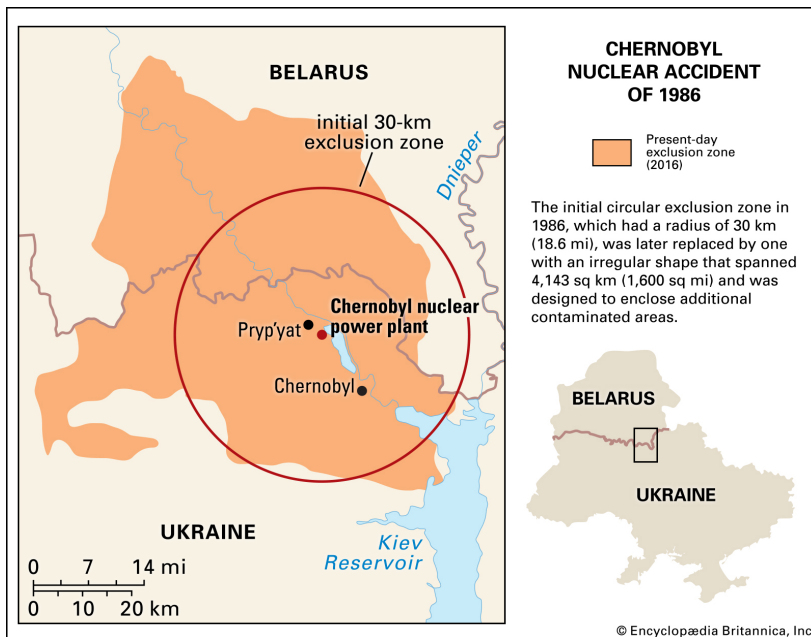
The station had four reactors, each capable of generating 1,000 megawatts of electricity, and it had been operational from 1977.

Engineers at reactor Unit 4 attempted a badly planned experiment on April 25-26, 1986, which resulted in the catastrophe. Workers removed most of the control rods from the reactor's core and turned off the reactor's power-regulating mechanism and emergency protection equipment, enabling the reactor to operate at 7 percent power. Others joined these failures, and the chain reaction in the heart went out of balance at 1:23 a.m. on April 26. A massive blaze was ignited by several explosions, which ripped off the reactor's heavy steel and concrete lid.

Significant volumes of radioactive waste were released into the atmosphere as a result of this and the subsequent fire in the graphite reactor core, which was carried great distances by air currents. There was also a partial meltdown of the heart.

Two plant employees died in the blast on the night of the disaster, and another 28 people died from acute radiation syndrome within a few weeks.

The Soviet Union established a circular exclusion zone based on the nuclear facility with a radius of around 18.6 miles (30 kilometers).



Apart from 5000 thyroid cancers (resulting in 15 deaths), the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation(UNSCEAR) has found that “there is no evidence of a major public health impact attributable to radiation exposure two decades after the accident.”

As a result of the disaster, 350,000 people were evacuated.