

February 21, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO: L. Joseph Callan
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: John C. Hoyle, Secretary /s/

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS - BRIEFING ON CODES AND
STANDARDS, 10:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1997,
COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE WHITE FLINT
NORTH, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND (OPEN TO PUBLIC
ATTENDANCE)

The Commission was briefed by the NRC staff and representatives from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) on the use of consensus codes and standards.

The Commission requested that the staff identify those plants which have reactor vessels or safety-related piping systems that do not fall under the design rules of ASME Code Section III and identify the design rules or Codes that do apply, characterize the significant differences between ASME Code Section III and ANSI/ASME Codes B.31.1 and B.31.7, and describe any inspection inconsistencies that could arise from the use of these differing standards.

(EDO)

(SECY Suspense: 4/25/97)

The staff should discuss the applicability of ASME Code Section III or other design/construction Codes of Record to operations, in particular, to those attributes that may not be addressed by the relevant Code requirements referenced in paragraphs (f) and (g) of 10 CFR 50.55a, and address the nature of design/construction Code requirements in the context of operations and the current licensing basis of operating plants.

Since the ASME Code is a product of a consensus process, the staff should provide its rationale for applying backfit considerations when endorsing later editions of the ASME Code. The staff should discuss its approach to performing backfit analyses for the numerous changes that are reflected in ASME Code revisions. In many cases, relaxations in one portion of the Code may be a result of consensus agreement for increased requirements in other portions of the Code. In considering the option of permitting licensees to selectively determine which requirements are applicable to their facilities, the staff should discuss how the backfit analyses consider the consensus view. Staff should also address the practicalities and implications related to the inspection and enforcement of licensees conformance to various different Code Edition requirements.

(EDO/OGC)

(SECY Suspense: 4/25/97)

The Commission urged the staff to improve the timeliness to complete NRC endorsement of new editions or revisions to previously endorsed codes and standards, where appropriate.

cc: Chairman Jackson
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
OGC
OCA
OIG
Office Directors, Regions, ACRS, ACNW, ASLBP (via E-Mail)
PDR - Advance
DCS - P1-24