

April 3, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Brian W. Sheron
Associate Director for Project Licensing & Technical Analysis
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Richard W. Borchardt */RA/*
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FROM Bruce A. Boger, Director */RA/*
Division of Inspection Program Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: STEAM GENERATOR ACTION PLAN REVISION AND COMPLETION
OF ITEM NOS. 2.4 AND 2.5 (TAC NO. MB0258)

As discussed in the Steam Generator (SG) Action Plan dated November 16, 2000 (ADAMS Accession No. ML003770259), completion of each of the major milestones in the action plan is to be documented by a memorandum/report provided by the lead division to the associate directors in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR). This memorandum documents completion of milestone Item Nos. 2.4, and 2.5.

Item No. 2.4 Review program requirements for routine communication between the resident inspectors and local officials based on public interest. Based on weighing current resident inspector responsibilities (e.g., inspection requirements, following up on plant events) against this review, revise program requirements if needed.

In response to the NRC Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report titled: "NRC'S RESPONSE TO THE FEBRUARY 15, 2000, STEAM GENERATOR TUBE RUPTURE AT INDIAN POINT UNIT 2 POWER PLANT" the staff developed an action plan to address issues which arose from the IP2 tube rupture event of February 15, 2000. The staff's action plan, contained in a memorandum dated November 3, 2000, to the Commission, discussed action items resulting from the IP2 event. Action item #2.4 required evaluation of the routine communication between the resident inspector and local public officials.

This issue stems from a paragraph in the OIG report (page 30) which discusses comments made by local officials of Buchanan County, New York to the OIG regarding their lack of routine communications with the NRC and the IP2 resident inspectors. The term "Local Officials" as used in the OIG report are those local officials who would man the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the county. These local officials desire greater access to the resident inspectors in order to obtain information about plant status for routine briefings and during plant events. The staff action plan mentioned above required the staff to review current policies and procedures for potential changes which may be appropriate for improved communications with local officials and the public. That review is documented in the following paragraphs.

Currently the NRC has the following program provisions to inform the public and local officials about the availability of the resident inspectors. First, as a matter of routine office policy, the regional Public Affairs Officer (PAO) issues a press release to announce the arrival of a new resident inspector at each site. The press release provides the name of the resident inspector and his/her office telephone number and is made available to the local media. In addition, inspectors names routinely appear in NRC inspection reports that are publically available for each plant at the NRC website. Further, all inspection and performance indicator information used by the NRC in its ongoing plant assessment under the Reactor Oversight Program (ROP) is updated quarterly on the NRC website.

Second, there are periodic convenient opportunities for resident inspectors to meet and interact with the members of the public and local officials. For example, the licensee's biennial full emergency preparedness (EP) exercises, which include participation of federal, state, and local officials, provide an opportunity for interaction during and following the EP exercise. This may be one of the most convenient opportunities to meet and may be arranged in advance through the regional PAO or EP staff. Although the location of EOC where local officials report during the EP drill may be away from the actual nuclear power station site, these officials can be given the opportunity to meet with the resident inspectors, as desired, at the conclusion of the EP exercise.

Third, the NRC Field Policy Manual, maintained by the Office of the Executive Director for Operations, establishes guidance for Regional Administrators to conduct periodic media briefings on both regional and agency-wide issues of interest to the public. For example, Region I has had nine public meetings during the past twelve months with the IP2 licensee that were open to the public providing an opportunity for interested parties to meet and interact with regional management and resident inspectors. Other opportunities exist for the NRC staff to interact with members of the public and local officials, such as open meetings which are conducted as part of the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process (ROP). The degree of interface that is considered necessary between resident inspectors and local public officials is expected to vary widely dependent upon the situation at each plant. In each case where inspectors are utilized for this purpose, regional management must carefully balance the use of inspection resources to complete inspections with the need to enhance public confidence. Any meeting between local emergency preparedness officials and the NRC must be coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between FEMA and NRC.

As a matter of management philosophy, the NRC maintains an "open door" policy with regard to access by the public or state and local officials to the NRC's staff or electronic documentation concerning a licensee's performance. The agency continues to encourage regional offices to ensure that every possible opportunity is given to members of the public or local officials who wish to contact and have a dialogue with the NRC staff. The new ROP has substantially improved the timeliness of NRC's routine assessment of licensee performance by providing quarterly website updates. More frequent routine updates are not considered warranted at this time. However, program guidance will be modified to encourage consideration of using resident inspectors for increased communication when the need arises and as directed by regional management, to built a better working interface and enhance local public confidence in the NRC's presence onsite. Completion of this program guidance enhancement will be tracked by ROP feedback form # 2515-336.

Item No. 2.5 Develop, revise, and implement, as appropriate, a process for the timely dissemination of technical information to inspectors for inclusion in the inspection program.

The Events Assessment, Generic Communications & Non-Power Reactors Branch of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) electronically disseminates technical information (e.g. NRC generic correspondence to licensees) to the regions. The Division of Inspection Program Management (DIPM) determined that each region has a process for handling and reviewing this information that involves review by regional management and dissemination of appropriate information to the inspectors for their use in inspection planning and preparation efforts. The determination of which inspectors should receive any particular document is dependent on the nature of the documents and the specialization of the inspectors. It is considered an inherent responsibility of the line management to ensure appropriate judgement is applied when disseminating such information. As a result of this review, DIPM is proposing that no change or modification to this process be made. However, as part of an ongoing self-assessment process we are continuing to evaluate suggestions for improvement to the accessibility of such information.

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* See previous concurrence.

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