

October 30, 2002

Dr. T. Tehan, Director
Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center
Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission
Reactor Road
Narragansett, RI 02882-1197

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-193/2002-202

Dear Dr. Tehan:

This letter refers to the inspection conducted on October 7-10, 2002, at your Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center (RINSC) Research Reactor facility. The inspection included a review of activities authorized for your facility. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

Various aspects of your safety and security programs were inspected including selective examinations of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, and observation of activities in progress. Based on the results of this inspection, no safety concerns or noncompliances of NRC requirements were identified. No response to this letter is required.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at (the Public Electronic Reading Room) <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, please contact Craig Bassett at 404-562-4712.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Patrick M. Madden, Section Chief
Research and Test Reactors Section
Operating Reactor Improvements Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No.: 50-193
License No.: R-95

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report No. 50-193/2002-202

cc w/enclosures: Please see next page

Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission

Docket No. 50-193

cc:

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Supervisor, Radiation Control Specialist
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Test, Research, and Training
Reactor Newsletter
University of Florida
202 Nuclear Sciences Center
Gainesville, FL 32611

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U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

Docket No: 50-193

License No: R-95

Report No: 50-193/2002-202

Licensee: Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission

Facility: Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center
University of Rhode Island

Location: Narragansett, Rhode Island

Date: October 7-10, 2002

Inspector: Craig Bassett

Approved by: Patrick M. Madden, Section Chief
Research and Test Reactors Section
Operating Reactor Improvements Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center
Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission
Report No.: 50-193/2002-202

This routine, announced inspection included onsite review of various aspects of the licensee's programs concerning operations and emergency preparedness as they relate to the licensee's two megawatt (2 MW) Class 1 non-power research reactor. The licensee's programs were directed toward the protection of public health and safety and were in compliance with NRC requirements. No safety concerns or violations of regulatory requirements were identified.

Organization and Staffing

- The organization structure and functions met the requirements specified in Technical Specifications Section 6.0, entitled "Administrative Controls."

Review and Audit Functions

- Oversight, review, and audit functions required by Technical Specifications Sections 6.1 and 6.4 were acceptably completed by the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee.

Procedures

- The procedural review, revision, and implementation program satisfied Technical Specification Section 6.5 requirements.

Operations

- The operations program satisfied Technical Specification and procedural requirements.

Design Control

- The design change program satisfied 10 CFR 50.59 requirements.

Operator Requalification Program

- Operator training and requalification was being conducted in accordance with the Operator Requalification Program.

Fuel Movement and Handling

- The fuel handling and examination program satisfied Technical Specification and licensee procedural requirements.

Maintenance and Surveillance

- The maintenance and surveillance program satisfied Technical Specification requirements.

Experiments

- The program for experiments satisfied Technical Specification and procedural requirements.

Emergency Preparedness

- The emergency preparedness program was conducted in accordance with the requirements specified in the approved Emergency Plan.

REPORT DETAILS

Summary of Plant Status

The licensee's 2 MW Research and Test Reactor (RTR) continues to be operated in support of laboratory experiments, operator training, and various types of research. During the inspection, the reactor was started up, operated, and shut down as required to support the irradiation of various tissue samples.

1. Organizational Structure and Functions

a. Inspection Scope (Inspection Procedure [IP] 39745)

The inspector reviewed the following to verify that staffing, reporting, and record keeping requirements specified in Sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center Technical Specifications (TS), Amendment No. 28, dated August 2, 2001, were being met:

- Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center (RINSC) organizational structure and staffing
- RINSC Operating Procedures Section 1, "General Considerations"
- staff qualifications and management responsibilities
- staffing requirements for the safe operation of the reactor
- facility annual reports for 2000, 2001, and 2002
- selected portions of the operations logs for the past year through the present

b. Observations and Findings

The RINSC organizational structure had not changed since the last operations inspection in November 2001 (see Inspection Report [IR] No. 50-193/2001-202). The inspector noted that a person had been hired to fill the position of an individual who had been a qualified Senior Reactor Operator (SRO) at the facility but who had resigned his position. The inspector noted that there are currently two people with active SRO licenses and one individual with an inactive SRO license. Two individuals are in training to become Reactor Operators.

The organizational structure and staffing were as required by TS and as reported in the Annual Report. Qualifications of the staff met TS requirements. The inspector verified, through a review of various records mentioned above, that management responsibilities were administered as required by TS and applicable procedures.

c. Conclusions

The organization structure and functions met the requirements specified in TS Section 6.0, entitled "Administrative Controls."

2. Review and Audit Functions

a. Inspection Scope (IP 40745)

In order to verify that the licensee had established and conducted reviews and audits as required in TS Sections 6.1 and 6.4, the inspector reviewed:

- Nuclear and Radiation Safety Full Committee meeting minutes from November 2000 through the present
- Nuclear and Radiation Safety Subcommittee meeting minutes from March 2001 through the present
- safety reviews and audits noted in the committee and subcommittee meetings minutes

b. Observations and Findings

Minutes of the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee (NRSC) from November 2000 through the present showed that the committee met at the required frequency and that a quorum was present. The topics considered during the meetings were consistent with TS requirements to provide direction and oversight, and to ensure acceptable use of the reactor.

A subcommittee of the NRSC met quarterly and conducted audits and reviews as required; the full NRSC then reviewed the results. Problems noted during these audits were discussed and recommendations for improvements were made. The licensee implemented the improvements as necessary.

c. Conclusions

Oversight, review, and audit functions required by TS Sections 6.1 and 6.4 were acceptably completed by the NRSC.

3. Procedures

a. Inspection Scope (IP 42745)

To verify that facility procedures were being reviewed, revised, and implemented as required by TS Section 6.5, the inspector reviewed selected aspects of:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Sections 1-13, last revised July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendices A-X, last revised July 25, 2002
- RINSC Abnormal Procedures, last revised January 9, 1996
- procedural compliance and implementation
- associated logs, records, and checklists

b. Observations and Findings

Administrative controls of changes and temporary changes to procedures were as required. The changes were reviewed and approved by the NRSC as required by TS. Training of personnel on procedures and changes was acceptable. Through observation of various activities at the facility, including reactor operation and sample handling, the inspector determined that licensee personnel conducted activities in accordance with applicable procedures. Records showed that procedures for potential malfunctions (e.g., radioactive releases and contaminations, and reactor equipment problems) had been developed and were available to be implemented as required.

c. Conclusions

The procedural review, revision, and implementation program satisfied TS Section 6.5 requirements.

4. Operations

a. Inspection Scope (IP 39745)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to ensure that the operations program was being implemented as required in TS Sections 3, 4, and 6:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 7, "Routine Startup," last revised August 17, 1992
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 8, "Operations at Power and Adjustments in Power Level," last revised January 26, 1995, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-11, "Shift Record Data Sheet," Rev 4, dated July 25, 2002, and on RINSC Form NSC-18, "RINSC Reactor Operations Data," Rev dated September 1995
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 9, "Shutdown," last revised October 6, 1999, documented on RINSC Form NSC-1C, "Shutdown Check Sheet," Rev 2, dated July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix V, "RINSC Pre-Start Checkout," Rev 4, approved July 25, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1, "Pre-Startup Check Sheet," Rev 1, dated November 20, 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix W, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Checks," Rev 1, approved July 25, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1A, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Check Sheet," Rev 1, dated July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operations Log Books Nos. 50 and 51
- staffing for reactor operations
- selected operational, start-up, and shutdown activities on October 8, 2002

b. Observations and Findings

The operating logs and records from July 2001 through the present were reviewed. The inspector determined that the documents provided an indication of operational activities as required by TS and procedures. This included documentation of events

and/or problems at the facility and tracking or resolution of the problems. The logs and records also generally indicated that shift staffing was as required by TS. These logs and records further showed that operational conditions and parameters were consistent with license and TS requirements. Observation of operational activities in progress during the inspection further confirmed that these conditions and requirements were satisfied.

c. Conclusions

The operations program satisfied Technical Specification requirements.

5. Design Control

a. Inspection Scope (IP 40745)

To ensure that the licensee's design control program was being implemented as required in 10 CFR 50.59, the inspector reviewed selected aspects of:

- facility design change records documenting replacement of the Start-Up Channel, the Log N Period Channel, and the Log N Power Channel with a new Gamma Metrics Neutron Flux Monitor
- documents indicating facility configuration
- Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee meeting minutes for 2001 through the present

b. Observations and Findings

Design change records and observations of the steps taken to implement the change indicated above showed that the design control program at the facility was being followed. A committee had been formed to evaluate the change and a recommendation had been made to proceed. A 10 CFR 50.59 review had been completed and was to be submitted for NRSC review during the next meeting. The inspector noted that previous changes had also been acceptably documented in accordance with 10 CFR 50.59 and applicable licensee requirements. Those changes had been reviewed and approved by the NRSC as required. None of the changes constituted a safety question nor required a change to the facility Technical Specifications.

c. Conclusions

The design change program satisfied 10 CFR 50.59 requirements.

6. Operator Requalification Program

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69003)

The inspector reviewed selected portions of the following to ensure that the Requalification Program was being acceptably implemented:

- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix U, "Reactor Operator Re-Qualification," Rev 1, approved July 25, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-45, "Operator Requalification Program Checksheet," Rev 1, dated July 25, 2002
- current operator licenses and expiration dates
- operator physical examination records
- RINSC Operations Log Books Nos. 50 and 51

b. Observations and Findings

The Requalification Program was documented in RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix U, Rev 1 dated July 25, 2002. The revision had been submitted to the NRC for review and was approved by NRC letter dated January 16, 2001. Through reviewing requalification logs and records, the inspector found that the program was being maintained up to date. Operators with active licenses were completing the required activities to maintain their licenses current and their active duty status. This included completing the required training and the required number of hours of Senior Reactor Operator functions. Records showed that annual operating examinations and biennial written examinations were being completed by the operators as stipulated in the program. Physical examinations were conducted biennially (interval not to exceed 30 months) as allowed in American National Standard ANSI/ANS 15.4-1988, "Selection and Training for Research Reactors," approved June 9, 1988.

c. Conclusions

Operator training and requalification was being conducted in accordance with the Operator Requalification Program.

7. Fuel Movement and Handling

a. Inspection Scope (IP 60745)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify compliance with TS Sections 3.9 and 4.9:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 2, "Critical Experiments," last revised April 21, 1993
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 3, "Reloading the Core to a Known Configuration," original version - not yet revised
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 5, "Moving and Positioning the Core," original version - not yet revised
- fuel handling equipment and instrumentation
- fuel examination records
- RINSC Operations Log Books Nos. 50 and 51

b. Observations and Findings

Core loading procedures provided a prescribed method to move and handle fuel consistent with the requirements and provisions of the TS Sections 3.9 and 4.9 and the licensee safety analyses. Fuel movement and fuel examination records showed that the fuel of the current core, Core No. 2, was moved and examined annually as required. Records also showed that fuel-handling and monitoring equipment were operable prior to use. Personnel were knowledgeable of the procedural and equipment requirements for criticality control and assurance of fuel integrity.

c. Conclusions

The fuel handling and examination program satisfied TS and licensee procedural requirements.

8. Maintenance and Surveillance

a. Inspection Scope (IP 61745)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify that the licensee's maintenance and surveillance program was being acceptably implemented as required by TS Sections 3 and 4:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 10, "Reactor Facility Emergency Systems Checkout," last revised August 7, 1995
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix A, "Confinement System Semi-Annual Surveillance," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-20, "Confinement System Surveillance," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix C, "Secondary System Annual Inspection and Maintenance Program," Initial version - not yet revised, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-10, "Secondary Cooling Systems 1 and 2," Rev December 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix D, "Control Rod Parameters," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-43, "Control Blade Parameter Data Sheet," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix F, "Inspection of Reactor Pool and Suspension Frame," Rev approved August 24, 1995
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix W, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Checks," Rev 1, approved July 25, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1A, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Check Sheet," Rev 1, dated July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix X, "Monthly Maintenance," Rev 2, approved July 25, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1B, "Monthly Maintenance Check Sheet," Rev 2, dated July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operations Log Books Nos. 50 and 51

b. Observations and Findings

Records were reviewed for the years 2001 and 2002 to date. They indicated that corrective maintenance activities and problems were addressed as required by RINSC Operating Procedures appendices listed above. The records also showed that routine maintenance activities were conducted at the required frequency and in accordance with the applicable procedure appendix or equipment manual. Maintenance activities ensured that equipment remained consistent with the Safety Analysis Report and Technical Specification requirements.

Surveillance, test, and limiting conditions for operation (LCO) verifications for selected systems or components were reviewed and found to be completed on schedule and in accordance with the TS and procedures. All the recorded results were within the prescribed parameters. Associated records and logs referenced above were complete and were being maintained as required.

c. Conclusions

The maintenance and surveillance program generally satisfied TS requirements.

9. Experiments

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69005)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify that the licensee was in compliance with TS Sections 3.8 and 4.8:

- RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix P, "Incore Irradiation Procedures," last revised October 11, 1995
- RINSC Form NSC-7a, "Neutron Irradiation Request Form - Short Irradiation," last revised September 1994
- RINSC Form NSC-7c, "Incore Long Irradiation Request Form - Short Irradiation," last revised September 1994
- RINSC Form NSC-7x, "Neutron Irradiation Request Form - BioPAL 10-15 Minute Irradiations," last revised December 1999
- RINSC Operations Log Books Nos. 50 and 51
- experimental administrative controls and precautions

b. Observations and Findings

The experiments conducted at the facility were ones that have been in place for several years. Since the last inspection in this area in November 2001, the experiments that have been conducted were completed using approved methods and with the cognizance of the Reactor Supervisor and/or the SRO operating the reactor in accordance with TS requirements (e.g., reactivity limitations) and Appendix P instructions. The experiments were documented on the appropriate forms noted above and in the operations log as required. Engineering and radiation protection controls were implemented as required to limit exposure to radiation.

c. Conclusions

The program for experiments satisfied TS and procedural requirements.

10. Emergency Preparedness

a. Inspection Scope (IP 82745)

To verify that the licensee was implementing and complying with the RINSC Emergency Plan, Rev 1, dated March 2001, as approved by the NRC, the inspector reviewed selected aspects of:

- Emergency Plan Implementing Procedures, Rev 2, dated March 2001
- emergency response supplies, equipment and instrumentation
- training records for emergency response personnel
- offsite support and support agreements
- synopses and critiques of emergency drills and exercises for 2001 and 2002

b. Observations and Findings

The Emergency Plan (E-Plan) in use at the research reactor, Revision 1, was verified to be the same as the version most recently approved by the NRC. The E-Plan was audited and reviewed biennially as required. Implementing procedures were reviewed and revised as needed to effectively execute the E-Plan.

Supplies, instrumentation, and equipment, now maintained in various locations at the facility, were being maintained, controlled, and/or inventoried as required in the E-Plan. Through drill scenario and records review, emergency responders were determined to be knowledgeable of the proper actions to take in case of an emergency. Agreements with local offsite response organizations had been updated and maintained as necessary. Communications capabilities were acceptable with these support groups and had been tested.

Documentation of the drills for the past two years was reviewed. Emergency drills had been conducted as required by the E-Plan. Critiques were written following the drills to document the strengths and weaknesses identified during the exercise. Action items were developed to correct the problems identified. Emergency preparedness and response training was being completed typically just prior to the drills.

The inspector visited the Rhode Island Hospital and observed the supplies and equipment at this support site that would be available in case of an emergency. There appeared to be a good working relationship between the licensee and this support organization.

c. Conclusions

The emergency preparedness program was conducted in accordance with the approved Emergency Plan.

11. Follow-up on Previous Open Items

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector reviewed the licensee's actions taken in response to two previously identified Inspector Follow-up Items (IFIs) and a previous violation (VIO).

b. Observation and Findings

(1) (Closed) IFI 50-193/2000-202-01 - During a previous inspection in September 2000 (IR No. 50-193/2000-202), the licensee had stated that, with respect to the radiation protection program, an audit procedure and a matrix of areas/items to be audited had been developed and was being reviewed. The licensee had agreed to evaluate the feasibility of developing an audit procedure and a matrix that would be applicable to the entire facility and encompass all operations and safety programs. The licensee also indicated that a previous practice of having staff members from another RTR facility come and audit the RINSC facility would be reviewed and reinitiated as soon as it was possible to coordinate schedules.

During this inspection, the inspector reviewed the status of these issues. It was determined that the licensee had developed a matrix to track surveillance, maintenance, and related operational items. This facilitated conducting audits of the operations program. It was also noted that a person from a nearby RTR facility had completed an audit in the area of radiation protection at RINSC. These advances and improvements in the operations and auditing programs demonstrated that the licensee has made progress in these important areas of facility administration and control. This IFI is considered closed.

(2) (Closed) IFI 50-193/2001-202-01 - During an operations inspection at the facility in November 2001 (IR No. 50-193/2001-202), the inspector noted that some of the information required to be listed on the various operations logs and forms documenting reactor operation was redundant. In checking the actual information entered on the logs and forms, the inspector noted some inconsistencies in the records. For example, not all the required information was included on the logs and forms documenting reactor operations but RINSC Forms NSC-11 and NSC-18 were typically filled out when there were no reactor operations. However, on occasion, these forms were not filled out when no reactor operations took place. The Reactor Supervisor indicated that he was analyzing the procedures requiring documentation of reactor operations and looking at the records and forms required. He was in the process of revising the forms so that the same data was not required to be entered in multiple locations and on various forms. His goal was to eliminate the redundant data entry. The issue of procedure and form revision was identified as an Inspector Follow-up Item (IFI).

During the current inspection, the inspector noted that the licensee had made progress in efforts to revise procedures and forms and to eliminate redundant data. In an effort to update the operations procedures, RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 6, "Reactor and Control Systems Checkout Procedures," approved

August 28, 1985, had been reviewed and the instructions and requirements contained therein had been replaced by or moved to various Appendices. These Appendices included: 1) RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix D, "Control Rod Parameters," Rev 2, approved October 6, 1999; 2) RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix V, "RINSC Pre-Start Checkout," Rev 4, approved July 25, 2002; 3) RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix W, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Checks," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001; and 4) RINSC Operating Procedure Appendix X, "Monthly Maintenance," Rev 2, approved November 20, 2001.

Although the operations procedures review and revision program is continuing, because of the progress that has been made, this issue is considered closed.

(3) (Closed) VIO 50-193/2001-202-02 - During the inspection noted above, the inspector noted that, prior to August 1999, alarm detection system tests had been required to be conducted each month. On August 30, 1999, this requirement was revised and the testing frequency was changed to quarterly. A review of test records for the years 1999 through 2001 indicated that the tests were completed on November 22, 1999, April 3, 2000, August 11, 2000, January 2, 2001, April 18, 2001, and September 25, 2001. Therefore, during that time frame, the alarms had not been tested quarterly as required. The failure to test the alarm detection system quarterly was cited as a violation of the Security Plan.

During this inspection, the inspector reviewed the alarm system test records for 2002. It was noted that the tests were being conducted quarterly as required. Also, a matrix had been developed that readily indicated when this test, as well as others that were required to be performed, were due. This item is considered closed.

12. Exit Interview

The inspection scope and results were summarized on October 10, 2002, with members of licensee management. The inspector described the areas inspected and discussed in detail the inspection findings. No dissenting comments were received from the licensee. Although proprietary information was reviewed during the inspection, no such material is included in this report.

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Licensee

H. Bicehouse, Radiation Protection Officer and Assistant Director for Reactor Safety
J. Davis, Reactor Supervisor
D. Johnson, Health Physicist
W. Simoneau, Assistant Director for Reactor Operations
T. Tehan, Director, Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center

Other Personnel

V. Rose, Chairman, Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission
D. Shearer, Chief Physicist and Radiation Safety Officer, Rhode Island Hospital

INSPECTION PROCEDURES USED

IP 39745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Organization, Operations, and Maintenance Activities
IP 40745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Review and Audit and Design Change Functions
IP 42745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactor Procedures
IP 60745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Fuel Handling
IP 61745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Surveillance
IP 69003: Class 1 Non-Power Reactor Operator Licenses, Requalification, and Medical Activities
IP 69005: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Experiments
IP 82745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Emergency Preparedness

ITEMS OPENED, CLOSED, AND DISCUSSED

Opened

None

Closed

50-193/2000-202-01	IFI	Follow-up on the issues of: 1) developing an audit procedure and matrix covering all aspects of the operations and safety programs at the facility, and 2) having audits conducted by people outside the University of Rhode Island system.
50-193/2001-202-01	IFI	Follow-up on the issue of revising the various forms and logs used to document reactor operation to eliminate redundancy of the data entered.
50-193/2001-202-02	VIO	Failure to test the alarm detection system quarterly as required by the Security Plan.

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ADAMS	Agencywide Documents Access and Management System
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
E-Plan	Emergency Plan
IFI	Inspector Follow-up Item
IP	Inspection Procedure
IR	Inspection Report
LCO	Limiting Conditions for Operation
MW	Megawatt
No.	Number
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRSC	Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee
PAR	Publicly Available Records
Rev	Revision
RIAEC	Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission
RINSC	Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center
RTR	Research and Test Reactor
SRO	Senior Reactor Operator
TS	Technical Specification
VIO	Violation