

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
WASHINGTON D.C. 20555

June 15, 1993

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE 93-44: OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES DURING A DUAL-UNIT
TRANSIENT

Addressees

All holders of operating licenses or construction permits for nuclear power reactors.

Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this information notice to inform addressees of an event during which an atypical shift staffing level and lack of familiarity with the tasks to be performed in that shift configuration affected the ability of the control room operating shift to respond to the event. It is expected that recipients will review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, as appropriate, to avoid similar problems. However, suggestions contained in this information notice are not NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required.

Description of Circumstances

On December 31, 1992, a dual-unit reactor trip initiated by an electrical fault in the switchyard occurred at the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant. Units 1 and 2 at Sequoyah share a common control room. At the time of the event the control room reactor operator staffing was the minimum allowed by the plant Technical Specifications (TS); shift staffing consisted of five licensed senior operators (the shift operations supervisor, one assistant shift operations supervisor for each unit, the shift technical advisor, and an additional senior operator) and three reactor operators - two assigned to Unit 1 and one assigned to Unit 2. The NRC inspection team investigating the event concluded that the Unit 2 response to the event, with one reactor operator, was hampered by lack of adherence to procedures, operator errors, and an unnecessary cooldown of the reactor coolant system (RCS) after the reactor trip. The Unit 1 response to the same event, with two reactor operators, was normal.

Discussion

An NRC inspection team reviewed the effects of the Unit 2 staffing level during the event with regard to the crew's ability to stabilize the unit after the reactor trip occurred. The inspection team concluded that the Unit 2 staffing level delayed the recovery of plant systems, contributed to erroneous decisions made by the assistant shift operations supervisor (ASOS), and

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overburdened and challenged the crew's ability to perform tasks in the manner in which it was trained. Control room simulator training scenarios had not been conducted using only one reactor operator.

Although the normal shift staffing and training consisted of two reactor operators for each unit, licensee operational staffing practices resulted in the frequent use of one reactor operator for one of the units. The licensee used this reduced staffing configuration 12 times in December 1992. In this configuration, with the dual-unit transient, the single reactor operator performed all of the recovery evolutions for the unit as directed by the ASOS in charge of the unit.

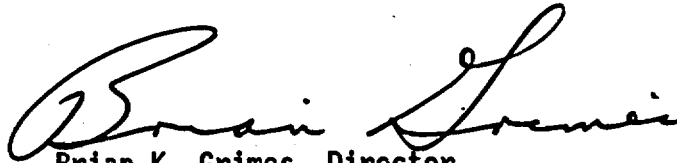
Because of delays caused by the one reactor operator performing primary and secondary system recovery evolutions, as required by the applicable recovery procedures, an RCS cooldown resulted. This was a direct result of the crew not adequately controlling auxiliary feedwater after the reactor trip. The atypical staffing level also contributed to problems involving the decision of the assistant shift operations supervisor to use the normal-batch borate process in response to the cooldown rather than the emergency borate process as required by the emergency procedure. The decision not to use the emergency borate process was made, in part, because of the reluctance of the assistant shift operations supervisor to commit the one reactor operator to the emergency borate process, which restricts the operator's attention to monitoring only that activity.

As a corrective action to prevent recurrence, the licensee implemented revised administrative controls to ensure that the control room staffing will be maintained at two reactor operators for each operating unit. The need for additional training at minimum staffing levels is being evaluated by the licensee.

Related Generic Communications

1. IN 85-80, "Timely Declaration of an Emergency Class, Implementation of an Emergency Plan, and Emergency Notifications," dated October 15, 1985
2. IN 91-77, "Shift Staffing at Nuclear Power Plants," dated November 26, 1991

This information notice requires no specific action or written response. If you have any questions about the information in this notice, please contact one of the technical contacts listed below or the appropriate Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) project manager.



Brian K. Grimes, Director
Division of Operating Reactor Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical contacts: S. M. Shaeffer, RII
(615) 842-8001

D. R. Desaulniers, NRR
(301) 504-1043

Attachment: *(In accordance folder)*
List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED
NRC INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
93-43	Use of Inappropriate Lubrication Oils in Safety-Related Applications	06/10/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-42	Failure of Anti-Rotation Keys in Motor-Operated Valves Manufactured by Velan	06/09/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-41	One Hour Fire Endurance Test Results for Thermal Ceramics Kaowool, 3M Company FS-195 and 3M Company Interam E-50 Barrier Systems	05/28/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-40	Fire Endurance Test Results for Thermal Ceramics FP-60 Fire Barrier Material	05/26/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-39	Radiation Beams from Power Reactor Biological Shields	05/25/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-38	Inadequate Testing of Engineered Safety Features Actuation System	05/24/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-37	Eyebolts with Indeterminate Properties Installed in Limitorque Valve Operator Housing Covers	05/19/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
93-36	Notifications, Reports, and Records of Misadministrations	05/07/93	All U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission medical licensees.
93-35	Insights from Common-Cause Failure Events	05/12/93	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power plants (NPPs).

OL = Operating License
CP = Construction Permit

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Original signed by
Brian K. Grimes
Brian K. Grimes, Director
Division of Operating Reactor Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical contacts: S. M. Shaeffer, RII
(615) 842-8001

D. R. Desaulniers, NRR
(301) 504-1043

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GMarcus
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DOCUMENT NAME: 93-44.IN

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Brian K. Grimes, Director
Division of Operating Reactor Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical contacts: S. M. Shaeffer, Region II
(615) 842-8001

D. R. Desaulniers, NRR
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DOCUMENT NAME: SEQUOYAH.INF

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Brian K. Grimes, Director
Division of Operating Reactor Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical contact: S. M. Shaeffer, Region II
(615) 842-8001

D. R. Desaulniers, NRR
(301) 504-1043

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BGrimes
05/ /93

From: Richard V. Crlenjak (RVC)
To: TJK3
Date: Friday, May 28, 1993 1:01 pm
Subject: RII CONCURRENCE OF PROPOSED IN

Region II has completed a review of the proposed Information Notice, OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES DURING A DUAL-UNIT TRANSIENT. We have no further comments and concur with the proposed IN.

Should you need any additional info let me know.

Thanks, Jack

CC: WEH, PJK1, SMS, AFG, JRJ, TAP, EWM