

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

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February 27, 1980

IE Information Notice No. 80-06

NOTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Description of Circumstances:

On February 29, 1980, an immediately effective amendment to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations is to be published in the Federal Register that sets forth requirements for the reporting of significant events at operating reactors. A copy of the NRC Notice of Rulemaking is enclosed. The reporting requirement in the new section 50.72, "Notification of significant events," to 10 CFR Part 50 will be effective immediately under the authority of GAO clearance R0072 (Emergency Generic Clearance -Expires 7/31/80), and is being submitted to the General Accounting Office for review under the Federal Reports Act for permanent approval under NRC's existing GAO clearance for 10 CFR Part 50 (#R0071).

Paragraph (a) of §50.72 requires, in part, that the licensee notify the NRC Operations Center as soon as possible and in all cases within one hour by telephone of the occurrence of any significant event listed in the paragraph. Reports of events pursuant to §50.72 that are similarly required by Technical Specifications to be reported by telephone within 24 hours are considered to satisfy the Technical Specification requirement for prompt telephone notification. Technical Specification requirements for confirmation reports by telegraph, mailgram, or facsimile transmission still apply.

The primary channel for telephone notification of significant events should be through the dedicated telephone line established between the licensee and the NRC Operations Center. An NRC Duty Officer is available, 24 hours a day, in the NRC Operations Center. In case the licensee is unable to report a significant event over the dedicated telephone line, the licensee should contact the NRC Operations Center directly by commercial line.

Enclosure:
Notice of Rulemaking

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
10 CFR Parts 20 and 50

Immediate Reporting of Significant
Events at Operating Nuclear Power Reactors

AGENCY: U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

ACTION: Final Rule

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is amending its regulations, effective immediately, to require timely and accurate information from licensees to NRC following significant events at operating nuclear power reactors.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 29, 1980

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dudley Thompson, Office of Inspection and Enforcement, U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555, phone 301-492-8177.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The capability of the NRC to make timely decisions and to provide adequate assurances regarding actual or potential threats to public health and safety, depends heavily on the rapidity with which significant events are communicated by nuclear power reactor licensees to NRC. The majority of events occurring throughout the nuclear industry pose little or no serious or immediate threats to the public health and safety; however, certain events do pose such threats or generate fear or unusual concern.

NRC has an important obligation to collect facts quickly and accurately about significant events, assess the facts, take necessary action, and inform the public about the extent of the threat, if any, to public health and safety. Not only must NRC act promptly to prevent or minimize possible injury to the public, it must also take appropriate action to alleviate fear or concern created as a result of such events.

After the accident at Three Mile Island on March 28, 1979, the NRC staff acted to ensure the timely and accurate flow of information from licensees of operating nuclear power reactors following significant events. Dedicated telephone lines have been installed from all operating power plants to the NRC Operations Center and the Regional Offices. A line is located in each control room with provisions made for extensions to be located at other specified locations at the facility. When these phones are picked up to report significant events, they automatically ring at the NRC Operations Center and can be held open as long as needed.

NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement (OIE) issued Bulletins and sent letters requesting each licensee to review its prompt reporting procedures to NRC. These were intended to make certain that each licensee notifies NRC within one hour of the time the reactor is not in a controlled or expected condition of operation. Once the licensee has notified NRC, an open, continuous communication channel is established and maintained between the licensee and NRC.

The NRC staff has continued to evaluate licensees' responses to OIE's Bulletins and letters and to analyze the kinds of significant events that should be reported immediately. By their very nature, OIE's Bulletins and letters did not impose requirements on licensees, and in several instances licensees have not immediately reported significant events to NRC. Moreover, the Bulletins and letters did not describe in sufficient detail the specific types of significant events NRC determined had to be reported immediately. The Commission has found that in order to take necessary action to protect the health and safety of the public, twelve types of significant events should be reported immediately (within one hour) to it. Consequently, NRC has decided to publish a rule requiring the immediate reporting by telephone of these events. The events, which are described in detail in the rule, include serious events that could result in an impact on the public health and safety such as those leading to initiation of the licensee's emergency plan or any section of the plan, the causing of the nuclear power plant to be in an uncontrolled condition, the exceeding of a safety limit, an act of sabotage, or an uncontrolled release of radioactivity. With regard to initiation of the licensee's emergency plan, the Commission is presently in the process of promulgating a rule concerning requirements for emergency plans for nuclear power plants. Meanwhile, the Commission has published guidance on emergency preparedness at operating nuclear power plants in NUREG-0610. This guidance has been sent to all affected licensees.

In view of (1) the significance of these twelve types of events with respect to their ability to jeopardize the health and safety of the public, (2) the fact that most of these events are not required presently to be reported immediately to NRC, (3) the problem of licensees not having reported such events to NRC after receipt of OIE's Bulletins and letters, and (4) NRC's immediate need to know in order to act quickly, NRC has determined that there is good cause to waive the opportunity for the public to comment on this rule before its effective date, and has determined, therefore, that it is in the public interest to make this rule effective immediately.

Although this rule is being published in effective form without a prior public comment period, the public is invited to submit its views and comments. If possible, these comments should be submitted by April 29, 1980. After reviewing any views and comments submitted, the Commission may reconsider or modify the rule as it deems necessary.

Pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, and sections 552 and 553 of title 5 of the United States Code, the following amendments to 10 CFR Part 20 and 10 CFR Part 50 are published as a document subject to codification.

PART 20 - STANDARDS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST RADIATION

1. Section 20.403 is amended by adding a new paragraph (d) to read as follows:

§ 20.403 Notification of incidents.

(d) For nuclear power reactors licensed under § 50.21 or § 50.22, the incidents included in (a) and (b) above shall in addition be reported pursuant to § 50.72.

PART 50 - DOMESTIC LICENSING OF
PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION FACILITIES

2. The title preceding § 50.70 is changed to read as follows:
INSPECTIONS, RECORDS, REPORTS, NOTIFICATIONS
3. A new section 50.72 is added to read as follows:
§ 50.72 Notification of significant events.
 - (a) Each licensee of a nuclear power reactor licensed under § 50.21 or § 50.22 shall notify the NRC Operations Center as soon as possible and in all cases within one hour by telephone of the occurrence of any of the following significant events and shall identify that event as being reported pursuant to this section:
 - (1) Any event requiring initiation of the licensee's emergency plan or any section of that plan.
 - (2) The exceeding of any Technical Specification Safety Limit.
 - (3) Any event that results in the nuclear power plant not being in a controlled or expected condition while operating or shut down.
 - (4) Any act that threatens the safety of the nuclear power plant or site personnel, or the security of special nuclear material, including instances of sabotage or attempted sabotage.
 - (5) Any event requiring initiation of shutdown of the nuclear power plant in accordance with Technical Specification Limiting Conditions for Operation.
 - (6) Personnel error or procedural inadequacy which, during normal operations, anticipated operational occurrences, or accident conditions, prevents or could prevent, by itself, the fulfillment of the safety function of those structures, systems, and components important to safety that are needed to (i) shut down the reactor safely and maintain it in a safe shutdown condition, or (ii) remove residual heat following reactor shutdown, or (iii) limit the release of radioactive material to acceptable levels or reduce the potential for such release.
 - (7) Any event resulting in manual or automatic actuation of Engineered Safety Features, including the Reactor Protection System.
 - (8) Any accidental, unplanned, or uncontrolled radioactive release. (Normal or expected releases from maintenance or other operational activities are not included.)
 - (9) Any fatality or serious injury occurring on the site and requiring transport to an offsite medical facility for treatment.
 - (10) Any serious personnel radioactive contamination requiring extensive onsite decontamination or outside assistance.
 - (11) Any event meeting the criteria of 10 CFR § 20.403 for notification.
 - (12) Strikes of operating employees or security guards, or honoring of picket lines by these employees.

(b) With respect to the events reported under subparagraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) of paragraph (a), each licensee, in addition to prompt telephone notification, shall also establish and maintain an open, continuous communication channel with the NRC Operations Center, and shall close this channel only when notified by NRC.

IE Information Notice No. 80-06
February 27, 1980

Enclosure

RECENTLY ISSUED
IE INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date Issued	Issued To
80-05	Chloride Contamination of Safety Related Piping and Components	2/8/80	All licensees of nuclear power reactor facilities and applicants and holders of nuclear power reactor CP
80-04	BWR Fuel Exposure in Excess of Limits	2/4/80	All BWR's holding a power reactor OL or CP
80-03	Main Turbine Electro-Hydraulic Control System	1/31/80	All holders of power reactor OLs and CPs
80-02	8X8R Water Rod Lower End Plug Wear	1/25/80	All BWR Facilities holder power reactor OLs or CPs
80-01	Fuel Handling Events	1/4/80	All holders of power reactor OLs and CPs
79-37	Cracking in Low Pressure Turbine Discs	12/28/79	All power reactor OLs and CPs
79-36	Computer Code Defect in Stress Analysis of Piping Elbow	12/31/79	All power reactor OLs and CPs
79-35	Control of Maintenance and Essential Equipment	12/31/79	All power reactor facilities with an OL or CP
79-34	Inadequate Design of Safety-Related Heat Exchangers	12/27/79	All holders of power reactor OLs and CPs
79-33	Improper Closure of Primary Containment Access Hatches	12/21/79	All power reactor facilities holding OLs and CPs
79-32	Separation of Electrical Cables for HPCI and ADS	12/21/79	All power reactor facilities holding OLs and CPs
79-31	Use of Incorrect Amplified Response Spectra (ARS)	12/13/79	All holders of power reactor OLs and CPs
79-30	Reporting of Defects and Noncompliance, 10 CFR Part 21.	12/6/79	All power reactor facilities holding OLs and CPs and vendors inspected by LCVIP