

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

December 1, 1992

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE 92-79: NON-POWER REACTOR EMERGENCY EVENT RESPONSE

Addressees

All holders of operating licenses or construction permits for test and research reactors.

Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this information notice to alert addressees to the findings of an NRC review related to emergency event response at non-power reactors. These findings are on (1) emergency action levels (EALs) to determine emergency event classification, (2) sampling to measure a radioactive release, (3) dose assessment capability for a radioactive airborne release, and (4) notifications to the NRC. It is expected that recipients will review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, as appropriate, to avoid potential problems. However, suggestions contained in this information notice are not NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required.

Description of Circumstances

In November 1991, a small release of fission products at the Reed College TRIGA reactor (located in Portland, Oregon) was sufficient to activate the alarms of both the continuous air monitor and the gaseous stack monitor. Upon reviewing the EALs in the emergency plan, the licensee declared a Notification of Unusual Event and notified the NRC Operations Center and the State. The NRC responded to the notifications by sending an inspection team to the college to review the situation. The NRC also sent a Public Affairs Officer to respond to potential public and media interest. The State of Oregon also sent a monitoring team. At the facility, the NRC inspectors found that the licensee had characterized the release as fission products and had conservatively estimated the amount of radioactivity released. The NRC inspectors assisted the licensee in assessing radiological dose consequences. The local media and public, including the student body, posed extensive questions on the event and the release. During a press conference, the licensee and the NRC jointly addressed the health and safety concerns of the media and public.

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The event at Reed College prompted the NRC to review similar non-power reactor licensees to determine their capabilities to respond in similar circumstances. The NRC found that, while licensee capabilities varied, some licensees could not readily locate sampling equipment discussed in emergency plans for response, had not fully developed procedures for using the sampling equipment, and did not have immediate access to a method of correlating the quantity of radioactivity released to a dose at the site boundary. The NRC also found that the EALs and the criteria for notifying the NRC and other offsite agencies varied greatly between licensees. There were also examples of events classified as alerts for which emergency plans did not specify notification of the NRC. The specific licensees were informed of these findings.

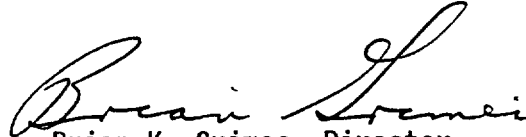
### Discussion

Licensee classification of an event under its emergency plan dictates the manner in which the NRC and other offsite agencies respond. American Nuclear Society/American National Standards Institute Standard 15.16-1982, "Emergency Planning for Research Reactors," Regulatory Guide 2.6, "Emergency Planning for Research Reactors," 1979, and NUREG-0849, "Standard Review Plan for the Review and Evaluation of Emergency Plans for Research and Test Reactors," October 1983 contain information on event classification. Improper classification of an event may prevent the licensee, the NRC, other agencies, and the public from responding appropriately to the event.

~~The licensee, the NRC, and the public gave considerable attention to the~~ unplanned radiological release at Reed College, although the release resulted in an estimated dose of much less than one millirem at the site boundary. The ability to quantify the magnitude and effects of a release and to establish the safety significance of the release proved extremely important in the Reed College event.

Some abnormal events will generate substantial public interest regardless of the actual safety significance of the event. A small unplanned radiological release is such an event. Notification of the NRC Operations Center, or NRC headquarters or regional contacts for events that could result in high public interest, can enable the NRC to respond, in coordination with the licensee, to issues raised by the media or the public about the event.

This information notice requires no specific action or written response. If you have any questions about the information in this notice, please contact the technical contact 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 contact: M. Mendonca, NRR  
(301) 504-1128

Attachment: List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices

Attachment  
IN 92-79  
December 1, 1992  
Page 1 of 1

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED  
NRC INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
92-78	Piston to Cylinder Liner Tin Smearing on Cooper-Bessemer KSV Diesel Engines	11/30/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-77	Questionable Selection and Review to Determine Suitability of Electropneumatic Relays for Certain Applications	11/17/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-76	Issuance of Supplement 1 to NUREG-1358, "Lessons Learned from the Special Inspection Program for Emergency Operating Procedures (Conducted October 1988 - September 1991)"	11/13/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-75	Unplanned Intakes of Airborne Radioactive Material by Individuals at Nuclear Power Plants	11/12/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-74	Power Oscillations at Washington Nuclear Power Unit 2	11/10/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-61, Supp. 1	Loss of High Head Safety Injection	11/06/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-73	Removal of A Fuel Element from A Research Reactor Core While Critical	11-04/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
92-59, Rev. 1	Horizontally-Installed Motor-Operated Gate Valves	11/04/92	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors

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 contact: M. Mendonca, NRR  
(301) 504-1128

Attachment: List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices

DOCUMENT NAME: 92-79.IN

\*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCES

+SEE MEMO FROM S. H. WEISS TO G. H. MARCUS 09/11/92

\*C/OGCB:DORS:NRR D/DORS:NRR  
GHMarcus BGrimes  
10/02/92 10/24/92

+RPB:ADM	*C/PRPB:DREP:NRR	*C/PEPB:DREP:NRR	*C/DRSS:RV	*D/OPA
TechEd	LJCunningham	RErickson	RPate	JFouchard
09/02/92	09/18/92	09/30/92	10/01/92	10/01/92

*OGCB:DORS:NRR	+LA/PDNP:DRPW:NRR	+PM/PDNP:DRPW:NRR	+C/PDNP:DRPW:NRR	+D/DRPW:NRR
PCWen	EHylton	MMendonca	SWeiss	BABoger
09/16/92	09/10/92	09/10/92	09/11/92	09/11/92

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

Technical contact: M. Mendonca, NRR  
(301) 504-1128

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Document Name: NPREMEV.IN \*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCES  
+SEE MEMO FROM S. H. WEISS TO G. H. MARCUS 09/11/92  
\*C/OGCB:DORS:NRR D/DORS:NRR  
GHMarcus BKGrimes  
10/02/92 10/ /92  
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TechEd LJCunningham RErickson RPate JFouchard  
09/02/92 09/18/92 09/30/92 10/01/92 10/01/92  
\*OGCB:DORS:NRR +LA/PDNP:DRPW:NRR+PM/PDNP:DRPW:NRR+C/PDNP:DRPW:NRR+D/DRPW:NRR  
PCWen EHylton MMendonca SWeiss BABoger  
09/16/92 09/10/92 09/10/92 09/11/92 09/11/92

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

Charles E. Rossi, Director  
Division of Operational Events Assessment  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical contact: M. Mendonca, NRR  
(301) 504-1128

Attachment: List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices

Document Name: NPREMEV.IN

+SEE MEMO FROM S. H. WEISS TO G. H. MARCUS 09/11/92

C/OGCB:DOEA:NRR D/DOEA:NRR

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+RPB:ADM C/PRPB:DREP:NRR C/PEPB:DREP:NRR *PCW* C/DRSS:RV

TechEd L. Cunningham *ERickson* *RPate* *PER* JFouchard

09/02/92 09/13/92 09/30/92 10/5/1/92 *TELECON* 10/1/92

OGCB:DOEA:NRR +LA/PDNP:DRPW:NRR+PM/PDNP:DRPW:NRR+C/PDNP:DRPW:NRR+D/DRPW:NRR

PCWen *PCW* EHylton MMendonca SWeiss BABoger

09/16/92 09/10/92 09/10/92 09/11/92 09/11/92

September 11, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR: Gail H. Marcus, Chief  
Generic Communications Branch  
Division of Operational Events  
Assessment  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

FROM: Seymour H. Weiss, Director  
Non-Power Reactors, Decommissioning and  
Environmental Project Directorate  
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV/V  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: PROPOSED DRAFT INFORMATION NOTICE ON NON-POWER REACTOR EVENT  
CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with NRC Inspection Manual Chapter 0720, I have enclosed, the subject draft information notice. The individuals who receive courtesy copies of this memorandum should also be considered by the Generic Communications Branch to be included for concurrence on this information notice.

/S/

Seymour H. Weiss, Director  
Non-Power Reactors, Decommissioning and  
Environmental Project Directorate  
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV/V  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc w/enclosure:

R. Erickson, NRR/PEPB  
L. Cunningham, NRR/PRPB  
F. Fouchard, OPA  
R. Scarano, RV/DRSS

bcc:

A. Adams	F. Kantor, EPB	R. Cooper, RI
T. Michaels	P. Qualls, RV	J.P. Stohr, RII
M. Mendonca	J. Reese, RV	C. Norelius, RIII
L. Cohen, EPB	R. Pate, RV	L. Callan, RIV

DISTRIBUTION: [IN]  
Central Files  
PDNP R/F  
EHylton  
SWeiss

\* See previous concurrence

PDNP/LA  
EHylton

9/10/92

PDNP:PM

MMendonca:lb

9/10/92

TECH ED\*  
JMain

9/02/92

PDNP:D  
SWeiss

9/11/92

DRPW:BB  
BBoger

9/11/92