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5928-03-20182
E910-03-030

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555

SAXTON NUCLEAR EXPERIMENTAL CORPORATION (SNEC)
OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-4
DOCKET NO. 50-146

SUBJECT: LICENSEE EVENT REPORT (LER) NO. 2003-001-00
"FAILURE TO VERIFY OPERABILITY OF THE CONTAINMENT VESSEL INTRUSION ALARM"

Gentlemen,

This letter transmits LER No. 2003-001-00, regarding the discovery of a problem with, and a previous failure to verify, the operability of the intrusion alarm on the Saxton Nuclear Experimental Corporation (SNEC) Facility Containment Vessel.

For a complete description of the event, refer to the text of the report provided on the attached NRC Forms 366 and 366A.

This condition did not adversely affect the health and safety of the public, if you have any questions please contact Mr. James J. Byrne at (717) 948-8461.

Sincerely,

G. A. Kuehn
Program Director, SNEC

cc: NRC Project Manager
NRC Project Scientist, Region 1
File No. 03058

IE22

NRC FORM 366 U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

LICENSEE EVENT REPORT (LER)

(See reverse for required number of digits/characters for each block)

Estimated burden per response to comply with this mandatory information collection request: 50 hrs. Reported lessons learned are incorporated into the licensing process and fed back to industry. Forward comments regarding burden estimate to the Records Management Branch (T-6 F33), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and to the Paperwork Reduction Project (3150-0104), Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. If an information collection does not display a currently valid OMB control number, the NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, the information collection.

FACILITY NAME (1)	DOCKET NUMBER (2)	PAGE (3)
Saxton Nuclear Experimental Corporation Facility	05000146	1 OF 3

TITLE (4)

FAILURE TO VERIFY OPERABILITY OF THE CONTAINMENT VESSEL INTRUSION ALARM

EVENT DATE (5)			LER NUMBER (6)			REPORT DATE (7)			OTHER FACILITIES INVOLVED (8)	
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	YEAR	SEQUENTIAL NUMBER	REVISION NUMBER	MONTH	DAY	YEAR	FACILITY NAME	DOCKET NUMBER
07	18	2003	2003	- 001 -	00	09	02	2003	FACILITY NAME	DOCKET NUMBER

OPERATING MODE (9)	N	THIS REPORT IS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR §: (Check one or more) (11)							
POWER LEVEL (10)	000		20.2201(b)		20.2203(a)(2)(v)	X	50.73(a)(2)(i)		50.73(a)(2)(viii)
			20.2203(a)(1)		20.2203(a)(3)(i)		50.73(a)(2)(ii)		50.73(a)(2)(x)
			20.2203(a)(2)(i)		20.2203(a)(3)(ii)		50.73(a)(2)(iii)		73.71
			20.2203(a)(2)(ii)		20.2203(a)(4)		50.73(a)(2)(iv)		OTHER
			20.2203(a)(2)(iii)		50.36(c)(1)		50.73(a)(2)(v)		Specify in Abstract below or in NRC Form 366A
			20.2203(a)(2)(iv)		50.36(c)(2)		50.73(a)(2)(vii)		

LICENSEE CONTACT FOR THIS LER (12)

NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code)
James J. Byrne	(717) 948-8461

COMPLETE ONE LINE FOR EACH COMPONENT FAILURE DESCRIBED IN THIS REPORT (13)

CAUSE	SYSTEM	COMPONENT	MANUFACTURER	REPORTABLE TO EPIX	CAUSE	SYSTEM	COMPONENT	MANUFACTURER	REPORTABLE TO EPIX

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT EXPECTED (14)			EXPECTED SUBMISSION DATE (15)	MONTH	DAY	YEAR
	YES (If yes, complete EXPECTED SUBMISSION DATE).	X NO				

ABSTRACT (Limit to 1400 spaces, i.e., approximately 15 single-spaced typewritten lines) (16)

The Saxton Nuclear Experimental Corporation (SNEC) Facility is in the final stages of decommissioning. Upon closing and securing the containment Vessel (CV) doors on 7/18/03 the Radiological Controls Technician responsible for the closure called FirstEnergy Dispatch to verify that the CV Intrusion Alarm was clear. Dispatch reported that the alarm was not clear and it had been in the alarm condition for the past several days. The CV was reentered and, upon inspection, it was discovered that the door was appropriately secured but that the alarm trip switch was not properly set. The switch was reset, verified operable through Dispatch and the CV was secured. The root cause of the event was inadequate training of the technician assigned to perform this task the previous day compounded by Dispatch not reporting to the SNEC Facility that the CV intrusion alarm was in the alarm mode outside of normal working hours. Training has been given to all Radiological Controls Technicians on procedural requirements for opening and closing the CV. Additionally SNEC Management has discussed with FirstEnergy Dispatch the importance and significance of the CV intrusion alarm and notifying SNEC Management if the alarm is in an off-normal condition.

I. Plant Operating Conditions Before the Event

The Saxton Nuclear Experimental Corp. (SNEC) facility is shutdown, defueled and undergoing decommissioning.

II Status of Structures, Components, or Systems That Were Inoperable at the Start of the Event and that Contributed to the Event.

None

III Event Description

Upon closing and securing the Containment Vessel (CV) doors (NH/DR) on 7/18/03 at 1430, the Radiological Controls (Rad Con) Technician responsible for the closure called First Energy Dispatch to verify that the CV intrusion alarm (IA/XA) for the west CV door was clear. The Dispatcher reported that the alarm had not cleared and it had been in an alarm condition for the past several days. Rad Con re-entered the CV and inspected the alarm trip switch and door. The switch was found in the alarm mode position and the door was locked. The switch was immediately re-set, verified operable through the Dispatch, and the CV was adequately secured.

This deficiency is a violation of the SNEC Facility Technical Specifications (TS), Section 1.1.3.2 which states the following:
The Containment Vessel (CV) and the Decommissioning Support Facility (DSF) shall be equipped with an intrusion alarm system. Intrusion alarms will be activated whenever the site is not manned. Operability shall be verified in accordance with Section 3.5.3.1.b.

IV Assessment of Safety Consequences and Implications of the Event

There were no safety consequences as a result of the event and the CV west door was verified locked so that inadvertent entry was prevented. Additionally no other intrusion alarms were identified during the period that the CV west door alarm was not operational.

V Previous Events and Extent of Condition

Event Report 2001-01 reported an event in which the Radiological Controls Technician performing the end of the day checklist failed to verify that a door, which would permit access to the CV, was locked. Corrective action implemented for this event was the briefing of all site personnel on the importance of physically verifying that actions are complete. This corrective action was inadequate to prevent recurrence, as it didn't include briefing of new personnel.

VI Identification of Root Cause

Training - The Rad Con Technician who had been assigned the duty of securing the CV at the end-of-day was a new employee. This individual did not have a clear understanding of the procedural requirements for securing the CV nor did he understand how the alarm system was reset or activated. There is no CV closure-training outline or practical factor sign-off for new Technicians hired at SNEC.

Low Priority Task - The primary duty of the Dispatch is to control the electrical grid to ensure that customers receive ample electrical power. Dispatch personnel consider SNEC alarm conditions as "low priority" alarms, which sometimes leads to untimely notification and lack of cooperation during surveillance alarm tests and CV closure. The Dispatch should have noticed that the CV intrusion alarm was in the alarm mode outside of normal work hours and telephoned SNEC.

VII Corrective Actions

Immediate and Short Term:

The switch was re-set and verified operable through the Dispatch.

Training was given to all Rad Con personnel concerning procedural requirements for opening and closing the CV. The SNEC Quality Assurance Officer interviewed several Rad Con Technicians to verify that the training was understood. The Technicians appeared to have an adequate understanding of the requirements.

SNEC Management has briefed FirstEnergy Dispatch on the importance and significance of the CV intrusion alarm.

Long Term:

A CV initial entry and closure training program was developed and given to all Radiological Controls Technicians. The program was also incorporated into the SNEC Rad Con Practical Factors book.

Field training was given to all Radiological Con Technicians and Group Radiological Control Supervisors (GRCS's) concerning CV and DSF alarm system operations. The training included the following:

- Activation and deactivation of alarm systems
- Location of alarm sensors
- Routine testing of alarms as required by SNEC procedures
- Documentation