

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 22, 1994

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE 94-60: POTENTIAL OVERPRESSURIZATION OF  
MAIN STEAM SYSTEM

Addressees

All holders of operating licenses or construction permits for pressurized-water reactors (PWRs).

Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this information notice to alert addressees to a potential for overpressurizing the main steam system during periods when one or more main steam safety valves are inoperable. It is expected that recipients will review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, as appropriate, to avoid such problems. However, suggestions contained in this information notice are not NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required.

Description of Circumstances

Westinghouse Nuclear Safety Advisory Letter NSAL-94-001, "Operation at Reduced Power Levels With Inoperable MSSVs," January 20, 1994 (Enclosure 1) describes a deficiency in the basis for STS Table 3.7.1, "Operable Main Steam Safety Valves Versus Applicable Power in Percent of Rated Power." The basis assumes that the maximum allowable initial power level is a linear function of main steam safety valve capacity. Westinghouse has determined that this assumption is not correct and notes that, when operating at low power in accordance with Standard Technical Specification Table 3.7.1, with one or more safety valves inoperable, a loss-of-load/turbine trip transient concurrent with a loss of feedwater could result in overpressurization of the main steam system.

Should a plant operating at full power experience such an initiating event, the transient would be terminated by a reactor trip. The reactor would trip on either high pressurizer pressure, overtemperature delta temperature, or steam generator low-low level. Secondary-side overpressure protection is provided by the actuation of the main steam safety valves. When a plant is operating at a reduced power level, a reactor trip may not be initiated early

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in the transient. This results in a longer time during which primary heat is transferred to the secondary side. The reactor eventually trips on low-low steam generator water level. However, if this event occurred while the unit is operating in accordance with Standard Technical Specification Table 3.7.1, with one or more inoperable safety valves, the trip may not occur before secondary pressure exceeds 110 percent of the design pressure.

The equation used in the original Westinghouse bases for Table 3.7.1 reduces the power range neutron flux trip setpoint linearly with the assumed reduction in safety valve capacity. The same equation is used in Babcock & Wilcox and Combustion Engineering plant designs. Therefore the potential for overpressurization of the main steam system also exists for these plants. NSAL 94-001 recommends the use of a more conservative equation to calculate the power range high neutron flux trip setpoint. However, the inclusion of NSAL 94-001 with this information notice should not be construed as an NRC endorsement of the revised equation as the only means to address this problem.

Operation at appropriate power levels when one or more main steam safety valves are inoperable can avoid exceeding 110 percent of design pressure as a result of assumed initiating events. With regard to inadequacies of existing plant technical specification bases, the NRC staff is considering the need for generic resolution of this issue. In the interim, the staff does not expect licensees that implement administrative controls also to propose changes to plant technical specifications.

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 *for*  
Division of Operating Reactor Support  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical contacts: N. Fields, NRR  
(301) 504-1173

C. Liang, NRR  
(301) 504-2878

T. Dunning, NRR  
(301) 504-1189

Attachments:

1. Westinghouse Nuclear Safety Advisory Letter 94-001
2. List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices



Westinghouse  
Energy  
LETTER  
Systems

Attachment 1  
IN 94-60  
August 22, 1994  
Page 1 of 9

NUCLEAR SAFETY ADVISORY



Business  
Unit

THIS IS A NOTIFICATION OF A RECENTLY IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL SAFETY ISSUE PERTAINING TO BASIC COMPONENTS SUPPLIED BY WESTINGHOUSE. THIS INFORMATION IS BEING PROVIDED TO YOU SO THAT A REVIEW OF THIS ISSUE CAN BE CONDUCTED BY YOU TO DETERMINE IF ANY ACTION IS REQUIRED.

P. O. Box 355, Pittsburgh, PA 15230-0355

Subject: Operation at Reduced Power Levels with Inoperable MSSVs	Number: NSAL-94-001
Basic Component: Loss of Load/Turbine Trip Analysis for Plant Licensing Basis	Date: 01/20/94
Plants: See Enclosed List	
Substantial Safety Hazard or Failure to Comply Pursuant to 10 CFR 21.21(a)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transfer of Information Pursuant to 10 CFR 21.21(b)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Advisory Information Pursuant to 10 CFR 21.21(c)(2)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

**SUMMARY**

Westinghouse has identified a potential safety issue regarding plant operation within Technical Specification Table 3.7-1. This issue does not represent a substantial safety hazard for your plant pursuant to 10 CFR 21. However, this issue does represent a condition which may impact your plant's licensing basis.

Table 3.7-1 allows plants to operate with a reduced number of operable MSSVs at a reduced power level, as determined by the high neutron flux trip setpoint. The FSAR loss of load/turbine trip (LOL/TT) analysis from full power bounds the case where all MSSVs are operable. The FSAR (LOL/TT) event may not be bounding for the allowable operating configurations of Table 3.7-1 since the high neutron flux trip setpoint, which is identified in Table 3.7-1 for a corresponding number of inoperable MSSVs, may not be low enough to preclude a secondary side overpressurization condition. As a result, the basis for Table 3.7-1 may not be sufficient to preclude overpressurization of the secondary side of the steam generator.

Therefore, it is recommended that you review the enclosed information to determine the applicability of this issue to your plant. The enclosed information contains a more detailed description of the issue and identifies solutions that you may wish to pursue to address this issue. These solutions include, but are not limited to, a re-evaluation of the LOL/TT analysis and/or a change to Technical Specification Table 3.7-1.

Additional information, if required, may be obtained from the originator. Telephone 412-374-6460.

Originator: \* \_\_\_\_\_  
J. W. Fasnacht  
Strategic Licensing Issues

\* \_\_\_\_\_  
H. A. Sepp, Manager  
Strategic Licensing Issues

*\*Electronic copy of signed original provided to NRC courtesy of Westinghouse.*

Plants Affected

D. C. Cook 1 & 2  
J. M. Farley 1 & 2  
Byron 1 & 2  
Braidwood 1 & 2  
V. C. Summer 1  
Zion 1 & 2  
Shearon Harris 1  
W. B. McGuire 1 & 2  
Catawba 1 & 2  
Beaver Valley 1 & 2  
Turkey Point 3 & 4  
Vogtle 1 & 2  
Indian Point 2 & 3  
Seabrook 1  
Millstone 3  
Diablo Canyon 1 & 2  
Wolf Creek  
Callaway 1  
Comanche Peak 1 & 2  
South Texas 1 & 2  
Sequoyah 1 & 2  
North Anna 1 & 2  
Watts Bar 1 & 2  
Sizewell B  
Kori 1, 2, 3 & 4  
Yonggwang 1 & 2  
Salem 1 & 2

## Issue Description

Westinghouse has identified a deficiency in the basis for Technical Specification 3.7.1.1. This Technical Specification allows the plant to operate at a reduced power level with a reduced number of operable Main Steam Safety Valves (MSSVs). The deficiency is in the assumption that the maximum allowable initial power level is a linear function of the available MSSV relief capacity. The linear function is identified in the Bases Section for Technical Specification 3/4.7.1.1 and is provided as follows:

$$SP = \frac{(X) - (Y)(V)}{X} \times (109)$$

- SP = Reduced reactor trip setpoint in % of RATED THERMAL POWER
- V = Maximum number of inoperable safety valves per steam line
- X = Total relieving capacity of all safety valves per steam line in lbm/hour
- Y = Maximum relieving capacity of any one safety valve in lbm/hour
- (109) = Power range neutron flux-high trip setpoint for all loops in operation

Under certain conditions and with typical safety analysis assumptions, a Loss of Load/Turbine Trip transient from part-power conditions may result in overpressurization of the main steam system when operating in accordance with this Technical Specification. The following discussion describes the issue in more detail and provides recommended alternatives for addressing the issue.

## Technical Evaluation

The Loss of Load/Turbine Trip (LOL/TT) event is analyzed in the FSAR to show that core protection margins are maintained (DNBR), the RCS will not overpressurize, and the main steam system will not overpressurize. The

analysis assumes an immediate loss of steam relieving capability through the turbine and coincident loss of all main feedwater. No credit is taken for the direct reactor trip on turbine trip, since this trip would not be actuated for the case of a loss of steam load. Rather, the transient is terminated by a reactor trip on high pressurizer pressure, overtemperature  $\Delta T$ , or low steam generator water level. Secondary side overpressure protection is provided by actuation of the Main Steam Safety Valves (MSSVs), which are designed to relieve at least full power nominal steam flow. The analysis verifies that the MSSV capacity is sufficient to prevent secondary side pressure from exceeding 110 percent of the design pressure.

The FSAR only analyzes the LOL/TT transient from the full power initial condition, with cases examining the effects of assuming primary side pressure control and different reactivity feedback conditions. With fully operational MSSVs, it can be demonstrated that overpressure protection is provided for all initial power levels. However, for most plants, Technical Specification 3.7.1.1 allows operation with a reduced number of operable MSSVs at a reduced power level as determined by resetting the power range high neutron flux setpoint. This Technical Specification is not based on a detailed analysis, but rather on the assumption that the maximum allowable initial power level is a linear function of the available MSSV relief capacity. Recently, it has been determined that this assumption is not valid.

The problem is that if main feedwater is lost, a reactor trip is necessary to prevent secondary side overpressurization for all postulated core conditions. At high initial power levels a reactor trip is actuated early in the transient as a result of either high pressurizer pressure or overtemperature  $\Delta T$ . The reactor trip terminates the transient and the MSSVs maintain steam pressure below 110% of the design value.

At lower initial power levels a reactor trip may not be actuated early in the transient. An overtemperature  $\Delta T$  trip isn't generated since the core thermal margins are increased at lower power levels. A high pressurizer pressure trip isn't generated if the primary pressure control systems function normally. This results in a longer time during which primary heat is transferred to the secondary side. The reactor eventually trips on low steam generator water level, but this may not occur before steam pressure exceeds 110% of the design

value if one or more MSSVs are inoperable in accordance with the Technical Specification.

Due to the wide variety of plant design features that are important to the LOL/TT analysis, it is difficult to perform a generic evaluation to show that the issue does not apply to certain plants. The following key parameters have a significant effect on the secondary side pressure transient:

- ▶ MSSV relief capacity
- ▶ Moderator Temperature Coefficient (MTC)
- ▶ Margin between the MSSV set pressures (including tolerance) and the overpressure limit
- ▶ Low-low steam generator water level reactor trip setpoint

#### Safety Significance

The Technical Specifications for most plants allow operation at a reduced power level with inoperable MSSVs. From a licensing basis perspective, this condition may result in secondary side overpressurization in the event of a LOL/TT transient. The licensing basis for anticipated operational occurrences (ANS Condition II events) typically requires that the secondary side pressure remain below 110% of the design value.

Westinghouse has determined that this issue does not represent a substantial safety hazard. There are several mitigating factors which provide assurance that there is no loss of safety function to the extent that there is a major reduction in the degree of protection provided to the public health and safety. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Adequate overpressure protection is provided at all power levels if all of the MSSVs are operable.
2. If a reactor trip does not occur but main feedwater flow is maintained, operation in accordance with the Technical Specification Table 3.7-1 will not result in an overpressure condition.
3. In any LOL/TT transient, the atmospheric steam dump valves and/or condenser steam dump valves actuate to relieve energy from the steam

generators prior to the opening of the MSSVs, and continue to relieve steam if the MSSVs do open. Since it is not a safety-grade function, steam dump is not assumed to operate in the safety analysis; however, in reality it is the first line of defense in protecting the secondary system against overpressurization. It is very improbable that all these components would be inoperable coincident with inoperable MSSVs.

4. Even near the beginning of core life with a positive or zero MTC, the primary coolant heatup resulting from the transient would tend to drive the MTC negative, which would reduce the core power and heat input to the coolant. This would result in a lower required MSSV capacity to prevent secondary overpressurization. The safety analysis does not credit the reduction of MTC during the transient.

#### NRC Awareness / Reportability

Westinghouse has not notified the NRC of this issue, based upon the determination that it does not represent a substantial safety hazard pursuant to 10 CFR 21. However, Westinghouse will send a copy of this letter to the NRC since this issue impacts information contained in NUREG-1431, "Standard Technical Specifications, Westinghouse Plants".

#### Recommendations

To address this issue, the following actions may be considered:

- (1) Modify Technical Specification 3.7.1.1 (or equivalent) and the associated basis such that the maximum power level allowed for operation with inoperable MSSVs is below the heat removing capability of the operable MSSVs. A conservative way to do this is to set the power range high neutron flux setpoint to this power level, thus ensuring that the actual power level cannot exceed this value. To calculate this setpoint, the governing equation is the relationship  $q = m \Delta h$ , where  $q$  is the heat input from the primary side,  $m$  is the steam flow rate and  $\Delta h$  is the heat of vaporization at the steam relief pressure (assuming no subcooled feedwater). Thus, an algorithm for use in defining the revised Technical Specification table setpoint values would be:



$$Hi \phi = (100/Q) \frac{(w_s h_{fg} N)}{K}$$

where:

- Hi  $\phi$  = Safety Analysis power range high neutron flux setpoint, percent
- Q = Nominal NSSS power rating of the plant (including reactor coolant pump heat), Mwt
- K = Conversion factor, 947.82  $\frac{(\text{Btu/sec})}{\text{Mwt}}$
- $w_s$  = Minimum total steam flow rate capability of the operable MSSVs on any one steam generator at the highest MSSV opening pressure including tolerance and accumulation, as appropriate, in lb/sec. For example, if the maximum number of inoperable MSSVs on any one steam generator is one, then  $w_s$  should be a summation of the capacity of the operable MSSVs at the highest operable MSSV operating pressure, excluding the highest capacity MSSV. If the maximum number of inoperable MSSVs per steam generator is three then  $w_s$  should be a summation of the capacity of the operable MSSVs at the highest operable MSSV operating pressure, excluding the three highest capacity MSSVs.
- $h_{fg}$  = heat of vaporization for steam at the highest MSSV opening pressure including tolerance and accumulation, as appropriate, Btu/lbm
- N = Number of loops in plant

The values calculated from this algorithm must then be adjusted lower for use in Technical Specification 3.7.1.1 to account for instrument and channel uncertainties (typically 9% power). The maximum plant operating power level would then be lower than the reactor protection system setpoint by an appropriate operating margin.

It should be noted that the use of this equation will resolve the issue identified in this letter by enabling you to re-calculate your Technical Specification 3.7.1.1 setpoints without further modifications to the structure of the Technical Specification. The re-calculated setpoints are likely to be lower than those currently allowed by the Technical Specification. However, you should be aware of at least two conservatisms with the equation. You may wish to review these conservatisms to evaluate the use of the equation relative to your plant specific operating objectives. It is possible to relax some of these conservatisms for use in the Technical Specification. However, relaxation of the conservatisms are likely to result in more significant changes to the structure of the Technical Specification.

First, the above equation (and the existing Technical Specification 3.7.1.1) is conservative since it is based on the maximum number of inoperable MSSVs per loop. For example, a representative four loop plant, in accordance with the current Technical Specification, should reduce the neutron flux setpoint to 87% if it has up to one inoperable MSSV on each loop. This means that the plant should use this setpoint whether there are one, two, three or four inoperable MSSVs, as long as there is only one inoperable MSSV per loop. Thus, the existing Technical Specification and the above equation are conservative and bounding. However, any relaxation of this conservatism must be interpreted with care. The reason is that the steam generators must be protected from an overpressurization condition during a loss of load transient. There are several events that could lead to a loss of load, including the inadvertent closure of one or all MSIVs. The affected steam generator must have a sufficient number of operable MSSVs to protect it from an overpressurization condition, if the MSIV (or MSIVs) was inadvertently closed.

Another conservatism in the above equation (and the existing Technical Specification 3.7.1.1) is in  $w_s$ , which is the minimum total steam flow rate capability of the operable MSSVs on any one steam generator. This value is conservative since it assumes that if one or more MSSVs are inoperable per loop, the inoperable MSSVs are the largest capacity MSSVs, regardless of whether the largest capacity MSSVs or the smaller capacity MSSVs are inoperable. The assumption has been made so that the above equation is consistent with the current structure of Technical Specification 3.7.1.1.

- (2) As an alternative, plant-specific LOL/TT analyses could be performed to maximize the allowable power level for a given number of inoperable MSSVs. Depending on key specific plant parameters, these analyses may be able to justify the continued validity of the current Technical Specification.
- (3) Consider modifying, as required, the Bases Section for Technical Specification 3/4.7.1.1 so that it is consistent with the plant safety analysis. The safety analysis criterion for preventing overpressurization of the secondary side is that the pressure does not exceed 110% of the design pressure for anticipated transients. However, in reviewing several plant technical specifications, it was noted that the bases for some plants state that the safety valves insure that the secondary system pressure will be limited to within 105 or even 100% of design pressure. This is not consistent with the safety analysis basis and should be revised to indicate 110%.

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED  
 NRC INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
94-30, Supp. 1	Leaking Shutdown Cooling Isolation Valves at Cooper Nuclear Station	08/19/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
94-59	Accelerated Dealloying of Cast Aluminum-Bronze Valves Caused by Microbiologically Induced Corrosion	08/17/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
94-58	Reactor Coolant Pump Lube Oil Fire	08/16/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for pressurized water reactors.
94-57	Debris in Containment and the Residual Heat Removal System	08/12/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
94-56	Inaccuracy of Safety Valve Set Pressure Determinations Using Assist Devices	08/11/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
94-55	Problems with Copes-Vulcan Pressurizer Power-Operated Relief Valves	08/04/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
91-79, Supp. 1	Deficiencies Found in Thermo-Lag Fire Barrier Installation	08/04/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
94-54	Failures of General Electric Magne-Blast Circuit Breakers to Latch Closed	08/01/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
91-45, Supp. 1	Possible Malfunction of Westinghouse ARD, BFD, and Nbfd Relays, and A200 DC and DPC 250 Magnetic Contactors	07/29/94	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.

OL = Operating License  
 CP = Construction Permit