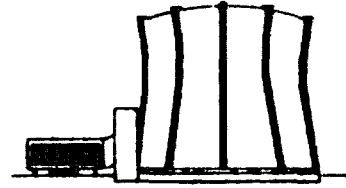


TEXAS ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT STATION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

3575 TAMU
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77843-3575



NUCLEAR SCIENCE CENTER
979/845-7551
FAX 979/862-2667

May 24, 2004

2004-0047

James, E. Lyons, Program Director
New, Research and Test reactors Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

SUBJECT: Reply to a Notice of Violation
NRC Inspection Report 50-128/2004-201, Facility License R-83.

This letter is the required response to the violation cited during the NRC inspection on April 12-15, 2004 at the Texas A&M University Nuclear Science Center. We appreciate the Inspector's detailed report and hope that our prompt corrective actions with respect to the cited violation are acceptable.

Please find below, each item addressed in the Commission's report that includes for each item 1) reason for the violation, or if contested, the basis for disputing the violation or severity level, 2) the corrective steps that have been taken and the results achieved, 3) the corrective steps that will be taken to avoid further violations, and 4) the date when full compliance will be achieved.

1. Nuclear science Center Standard Operating procedure Section VII-C-14, "Facility Contamination Surveys," Revision 3, dated December 4, 1997, requires in Step A that a smear survey of the Nuclear Science Center facility will be performed each month.

Contrary to the above, during the year 2003, 1) no radiation or contamination survey was completed on Bridge (Upper Research Level) during August; and 2) four instances were noted when no radiation survey was recorded on the floor plan of the area being surveyed.

1a. Reason: Looking back in our records, it became apparent that the reactor maintenance was scheduled during the month of August 2003. The reactor bridge was constantly being occupied by operators working on the control rods and fuel

bundles for inspection. The reactor was shutdown from operation during the latter part of the month. Health physics staff normally schedules all their monthly surveys around the third and fourth week of the month. Since the reactor was shutdown, they did not complete the radiation survey/contamination survey on the bridge during the month of August but completed their routine surveys after the reactor started up following maintenance.

1b. Corrective step that have been taken: The Health Physics staff has been advised on the importance on following operating procedures and conducting periodic surveys at regular intervals. It has also been noted that proper documentation will be maintained on the survey forms to reflect the changes in radiological conditions.

1c. Corrective steps that will be taken to avoid further violations: The standard operating procedure will be re-reviewed and propose changes that will allow greater flexibility in surveys during periods of maintenance and holidays and also provide health physics the specific areas to choose for radiation surveys. It is the intent of the health physics team at NSC to perform radiation surveys where warranted in the confinement to ascertain that no radiation hazards exist in areas open to general traffic.

1d. Date when full compliance is achieved: The Nuclear Science Center facility is in full compliance.

2a. Reason: The health physics staff missed recording of radiation surveys on the floor plan on four different instances. The survey locations were general traffic areas inside the confinement which are non-radiation areas and where no open isotopes are used. Monthly contamination surveys were performed during those four instances. After talking to individual staff who performed the surveys, it became apparent that two of the survey instruments were being used for shipping purposes while they preformed the contamination surveys and they missed noting down the radiation levels. Also the reviews were performed by RSO designee who was under training.

2b. Corrective step that have been taken: The health physics staff was informed on the need to complete the tasks at regular intervals before submitting the surveys for review. The health physics reviewer has been trained to look for proper completion of the surveys before review signature.

2c. Corrective steps that will be taken to avoid further violations: The standard operating procedure and the survey forms will be re-reviewed and propose changes that will allow greater flexibility in documenting surveys and also allow specific areas to choose for radiation surveys.

2d. Date when full compliance is achieved: The Nuclear Science Center facility is in full compliance.

In conclusion, except for the minor violation identified above, overall, the radiation safety program satisfied the regulatory requirements and all the applicable features of the program were adequately implemented. The NSC management will provide increased attention and oversight of all licensed activities.

If you require additional information, please contact me at (979) 845-7551.

Sincerely,



Dr. W. D. Reece, Director
Nuclear Science Center

LV/jg

Xc: 211/ Central File
NRC Inspection File
Craig Bassett/ NRC Inspector
David C. Hyland/Deputy Director, TEES