

August 12, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: Eileen McKenna, Section Chief
Policy and Rulemaking Program Section A
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

FROM: David Diec, Project Manager */RA/*
Policy and Rulemaking Program Section A
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SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF MEETING TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF FIRE
DETECTION AND SUPPRESSION FOR SAFE SHUTDOWN
OPERATOR MANUAL ACTIONS AND POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF
OPERATOR MANUAL ACTIONS ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA TO
PARAGRAPH III.G (CAT. 3 MEETING)

On June 23, 2004, the staff met with external stakeholders to discuss the comments concerning the role of fire detection/suppression for safe shutdown and operator manual actions (OMAs) acceptance criteria application to other sections within Paragraph III.G of Appendix R. These comments were made in response to a staff published Federal Register Notice 68 FR 66501, dated November 26, 2003.

In its presentation, the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) indicated that the inclusion of fire detection and suppression installed in the fire area constitutes a new requirement and is unnecessary due to pre-existing fire protection requirements (BTP 9.5-1). For example, the industry presented a case it believed to be applicable to the requirement of Paragraph III.G.1, where redundant cables were located in the same fire area, without detection and suppression.

Paragraph III.G.1 of Appendix R to Part 50 requires that one train of systems necessary to achieve and maintain hot shutdown conditions from either the control room or emergency control station(s) is free of fire damage. The licensee used manual actions in protection of one train as part of overall safe shutdown strategy. This fire area, in the view of the staff, would require detection and suppression because redundant cables were located in the same area being affected by a fire, as required by Paragraph III.G.2.

The licensees are concerned that they would be required to install fire detectors and suppression systems in such areas in order to obtain the enforcement discretion, as published in 68 FR 66501. However, they agreed that detection and suppression are an integral part of a defense in depth approach. NEI and industry representatives also indicated that they believed the interim acceptance criteria for OMAs should be applied consistently to all provisions of Paragraph III.G.

A member of Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) indicated that existing fire protection requirements, as stated in Paragraph III.G.2 of Appendix R, are adequate; that

licensees are not in compliance, and that the proposed criteria to use OMAs should be the last resort and not be the replacement means for the barrier protection and separation criteria in Paragraph III.G.2.

At the conclusion of the meeting, stakeholders requested the following be addressed in the enforcement discretion policy and proposed rulemaking: 1) Rationale for detection and suppression requirement, 2) Rationale for omitting operator manual actions during the formulation of Appendix R requirements, and 3) Explanation of the types of operator manual actions in different provisions of Paragraph III.G to Appendix R. NEI will perform an industry-wide survey to determine whether operator manual actions acceptance criteria should be applied to all provisions of Paragraph III.G and the potential impacts.

The NRC staff found the meeting provided useful insights into ongoing industry concerns and suggestions for resolution. During the meeting, the NRC staff did not make any policy decisions.

Attachment: Attendance Sheet

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