

From: Scott Barber | RT
To: Anne Passarelli
Date: 5/25/04 3:43PM
Subject: Fwd: Referral Letter Due 5/28/04

Ironie.....I just got through reading the final ARB form for this allegation (I was updating our branch status file) and I was going to send you a friendly reminder when the attached enters my inbox.

Is the enclosure for the referral on track? It's OK if the answer is no, just tell me you can get it done by the due date.....:-)

Information in this record was deleted
in accordance with the Freedom of Information
Act, exemptions 2
FOIA- 2004-314

N-11

From: Sharon Johnson
To: Daniel Holody
Date: 5/25/04 3:29PM
Subject: Referral Letter Due 5/28/04

Dan

F Y I

Your Branch has a referral letter due out by 5/28/04 for allegation # RI-2004-A-0061.

Thanks
Sharon

CC: David Vito; Leanne Harrison

RI-2003-A-0138

Subject: Concerns You Raised to the NRC Regarding Hope Creek

Dear [REDACTED]

This letter refers to your meeting with Mr. M. Gray, the NRC Senior Resident Inspector at Hope Creek, on October 24, 2003, during which you expressed concerns about safety culture as related to the performance of assigned tasks and the identification of problems by the nuclear equipment operators (NEO) at Hope Creek, questionable activities with regard to the training and qualification of NEOs, and negative reactions by your peers (union members) to safety concerns you raised. You informed Mr. Gray that you have discussed your concerns with the Employee Concerns Program Coordinator at Salem/Hope Creek over the past six months. You were interviewed on October 29, 2003, by Mr. J. Teator, a Senior Special Agent with the NRC Office of Investigations, and Mr. S. Barber, of the NRC Region I technical staff, so that we could obtain additional specific detail from you regarding your concerns.

Enclosure 1 to this letter documents your concerns as we understand them. We have initiated actions to examine your concerns and will inform you of our findings. If we have misunderstood or mischaracterized your concerns as described in the enclosure, please contact me so that we can assure they are adequately addressed prior to the completion of our review.

As part of our response to your concerns, we intend to refer some of them to Public Service Electric and Gas (PSEG) for review and resolution. We will evaluate PSEG's response, and inform you of our disposition once we have evaluated the response and taken any additional actions, if necessary, to address these concerns. In your conversation with Mr. Gray, on October 24, 2003, you indicated that you do not object to having any of your concerns referred to PSEG for review.

In resolving concerns raised to the NRC, the NRC takes all reasonable efforts not to disclose your identity to any organization, individual outside the NRC, or the public unless you clearly indicate no objection to being identified. Your name and any other identifying information will be excluded from the information that is referred to PSEG for review. However, you should be aware that your identity could be disclosed if the NRC determines that disclosure is necessary to ensure public health and safety, to inform Congress or State or Federal agencies in furtherance of NRC responsibilities under law or public trust, to support a hearing on an NRC enforcement matter, or if you have taken actions that are inconsistent with and override the purpose of protecting an alleged's identity. Also, your identity may be disclosed at the NRC's discretion in order to pursue an investigation of an issue involving potential wrongdoing, such as your concern related to potential cheating during NEO training activities.

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

[REDACTED]

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RI-2003-A-0138

If a request is filed under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) related to your areas of concern, the information provided will, to the extent consistent with that act, be purged of names and other potential identifiers. Further, you should be aware you are not considered a confidential source unless confidentiality has been formally granted in writing.

[REDACTED]

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RI-2003-A-0138

Enclosed with this letter is a brochure entitled "Reporting Safety Concerns to the NRC," which provides a description of the NRC process in these matters.

Thank you for notifying us of your concerns. We will advise you when we have completed our review. Should you have any additional questions, or if the NRC can be of further assistance in this matter, please call me via the NRC Region I toll free telephone number 1-800-432-1156.

Sincerely,

David J. Vito
Senior Allegation Coordinator

Enclosures:
As Stated

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[redacted] ex

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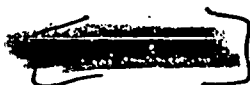
RI-2003-A-0138

Distribution:
Allegation File No. RI-2003-A-0138

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OFFICE	ORA:SAC	DRP:RPB3	OI:RI/FOD	ORA/RC	
NAME	DVito/lmh	GMeyer	Wilson/Teator	KFarrar	
DATE	11/ /2003	11/ /2003	11/ /2003	11/ /2003	

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RI-2003-A-0138

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ENCLOSURE 1

RI-2003-A-0138

Concern 1:

You assert that nuclear equipment operators (NEOs) have cheated during qualifications classroom training and have not appropriately satisfied and/or completed on-the-job training (OJT) tasks required for qualification.

You named three individuals who were cheating on exams (8 to 10 exams) which were given as part of NEO classroom training beginning in late-March 2001, relating to NEO familiarization with systems and equipment in the Hope Creek reactor building and turbine building. You indicated that this was an orchestrated effort, in which an individual on the other side of the classroom would distract the exam proctor by asking a question, while the three individuals-in-question exchanged answers.

You also stated that certain NEOs would have "signing parties" for the "popular guys" where the more experienced NEOs would verbally ask the qualifying individual to describe an OJT qualification task job and then it would be signed off. You indicated that unpopular people (like yourself) would have to go into the plant to perform the OJT task.

Concern 2:

You assert that there is a poor safety culture within the Hope Creek union membership, especially within the NEO group, which supports harassment and the exclusion of individuals who bring problems to management. You stated that the union insists that members bring problems to the union in lieu of management for resolution. Accordingly, when issues are described to management by the union, they are only to relate the physical description of the event/incident, without the use of names (so as not to incriminate a union member). You further described that if a union member identifies a concern that involves another union member, the union can fine you, change your status to "a member not in good standing," and ultimately that this could cost you your job.

As an example, you described an incident in which you were a second verifier for an equipment tagout. You stated that you identified a problem (a switch in an incorrect position on a breaker that was "red-tagged" (Do-Not-Operate)), and wrote a Notification which subsequently got a fellow union member in trouble. You explained that after this occurred, peer NEOs would not work with you. You described how you would be re-assigned to work in another building alone (even when two NEOs were originally assigned to perform the tagout task at hand) because you previously reported problems.

You cited another example in which an NEO co-worker who was assigned to perform a job with you in the switchyard stated, "there is no way I will work with you because you will narc me out."

You also indicated that because you were an individual who raised concerns, other NEOs would sometimes indicate that they were not comfortable signing off on your OJT qualification tasks (see further detail in Concerns 3 and 5 below).

Concern 3:

You assert that NEOs disregard established requirements and embrace lax and/or questionable practices when recording readings and performing equipment manipulations in the field/plant. You provided the following examples:

- You explained that when taking emergency diesel generator kilowatt power output readings for a surveillance test, you were coached by a fellow co-worker to make sure that the "readings come out right." Despite the gauge needle moving within a band and your desire to record the average reading of this band, your co-worker insisted that you record the "low" reading to ensure that the test result was within specification. You indicated that it was implied that if you didn't "go along," the co-worker wouldn't sign off on your OJT training.
- You indicated that there was a similar problem with a discharge pressure gauge on the service water pumps, whereby it was difficult to read the gauge, so it was suggested that the most desirable reading be selected when doing surveillance. You added that a Notification was written on the gauge, but that PSEG has been very slow to fix it.
- You explained that while assigned to perform a "shop-103" verification to ensure the correct switch position on a turbine building supply or exhaust fan, you found that the switch was out of position with a red blocking tag applied. Despite the blocking tag and the requirements associated with it, a co-worker re-positioned the switch.
- You stated that the hydrogen tanks (located outside) that make-up hydrogen to the turbine generator are isolated from the generator by three valves configured in series. You explained that more than one valve should be maintained closed for proper isolation. However, to avoid having to go out in the yard when hydrogen make-up is required, NEOs are inappropriately maintaining two of the three valves open (V019 and V013).
- You indicated that on a number of occasions you found pump lubricating bubblers with no visible oil in them, and that no Notifications were ever initiated to identify these problems. You noted, however, that the local site glass still showed an oil level. You could not recall many specifics with regard to which pumps were involved other than that one of the pumps was located in the reactor building on elevation 132' and may have been a reactor water cleanup pump.

Concern 4:

You stated that during the March 2003 forced outage to replace recirculation pump seals, you found that the reason for low cooling water flow to the seals was because a RACS valve downstream of the flow sensing orifice had a significant packing leak past the stem and not due to a problem with actual low seal flow. You stated that you were encouraged not to say what the real problem was because it would get somebody in trouble for a needless shutdown. You indicated that this demonstrated how the safety culture does not encourage the identification of real root causes of problems.

Concern 5:

You indicated that while the plant was starting up from a Spring 2003 forced outage following a turbine bypass valve being stuck open, one of two mechanical vacuum pumps tripped (the second pump was running). You responded to this occurrence with another NEO and found the site glass for water seal flow indicating low. You identified that the make-up valves to both pumps were closed, isolating water to the pumps and causing one pump to trip and the other to indicate a low level. Although you wanted to report the identified problem, you were told by your co-worker to report that they "kicked" the tank thereby agitating the level switch instead (so as not to point to the person who made the mistake). You indicated that your co-worker insisted that you report what he asked or you "weren't going to get any more help." You indicated that you reported the issue as you were instructed by your co-worker, but that you later informed ECP (about a month later) what actually happened.