



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS
WASHINGTON, DC 20555 - 0001

October 11, 2007

MEMORANDUM TO: O. Maynard, Chairman, Plant Operations Subcommittee

FROM: Maitri Banerjee, Senior Staff Engineer, ACRS **IRA**

SUBJECT: THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
PLANT OPERATIONS WITH NRC REGION IV ON AUGUST 14, 2007,
IN ARLINGTON, TEXAS

The minutes for the subject meeting is attached. It incorporates comments from your review. If you are satisfied with these minutes please sign, date, and return the attached certification letter.

Attachments: Certification Letter
Minutes

cc w Attachments: Plant Operations Subcommittee Members

cc w/o Attachments: F. Gillespie
C. Santos
S. Duraiswami
C. Brown



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MEMORANDUM TO: Maitri Banerjee, Senior Staff Engineer, ACRS

FROM: O. Maynard, Chairman, Plant License Renewal Subcommittee

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANT OPERATIONS WITH NRC REGION IV
ON AUGUST 14, 2007, IN ARLINGTON, TEXAS

I hereby certify, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that the minutes of the subject meeting on August 14, 2007, are an accurate record of the proceedings for that meeting.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "O. Maynard".

10/13/07

O. Maynard, Date
Plant License Renewal Subcommittee Chairman

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REACTOR SAFEGUARDS
 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANT OPERATIONS
 VISIT TO NRC REGION IV ON AUGUST 14, 2007
 ARLINGTON, TEXAS

On August 14, 2007, the ACRS Subcommittee on Plant Operations held a meeting at the NRC Region IV (RIV) office in Arlington, Texas. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the regional inspection and operational activities. The meeting was open to the public. In addition to the ACRS and NRC staff from RIV, representatives from Southern California Edison Company and Stars, Regulatory Affairs attended the meeting. The meeting was convened at 8:30 a.m. and adjourned around 4:10 p.m. No written comments or requests to make oral statements were received from the public related to this meeting.

Attendees

ACRS Members/Staff	RIV Presenters	RIV Staff	NRR Staff
Otto Maynard (Chairman)	Linda Smith	Brian Tindell	Paul Bonnett
Graham Wallis (Member)	Tony Gody	Mark Haire	
William Shack (Member)	Joseph Lopez	Don Stearns	
George Apostolakis (Member)	Michael Hay	Larry Ricketson	Public
Michael Corradini (Member)	John Hanna	Robert Latta	Michael McBearty (SCE)
Said Abdel-Khalik (Member)	Linda Howell	Carl Corbin	Carl Corbin (STARS)
Mario Bonaca (Member)	Blair Spitzberg	Mike Chambers	
Maitri Banerjee (DFO)	Greg Warnick	Brian Larson	Other ACRS Staff
	Wayne Walker	Hasan Abuseini	David Bessett
RIV Presenters	David Loveless	Teresa Ryan	Girija Shukla
Bruce Mallett	George Replogle	Joseph Bashore	Jamila Perry
Pat Gwynn	Kelly Clayton	Claude Johnson	
Dwight Chamberlain	Paul Elkmann	Tom Stetka	
Roy Caniano	James Drake		

The presentation slides and handouts used during the meeting are attached to the Office Copy of these minutes. The presentations to the Subcommittee are summarized below.

Chairman Maynard convened the meeting by introducing the ACRS members present. Mr. Maynard stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss regional inspection and operational activities and gain insights.

Mr. Pat Gwynn, the Deputy Regional Administrator of RIV, introduced the staff and presented an overview of the RIV activities. He described the special challenges that face Region IV. Dr. Bruce Mallett, the Regional Administrator, noted that the large area of geographic coverage provides a special challenge to RIV. Other important issues facing RIV include: recruitment and retention of staff; maintenance of the resident inspector pool; knowledge management and remembering lessons learned; consistency in defining cross-cutting issues/aspects; best practices and alignment in the inspection finding significance determination process (SDP); external communication and outreach; and the level of verification in the inspection program.

Mr Roy Caniano, Deputy Director, Division of Reactor Safety, and Mr. Joe Lopez, Human Resource Management, presented an overview of the RIV activities related to knowledge management (KM). Mr. Caniano discussed the communication and implementation of the KM activities, strategies, and staff development. Although, every region's plan and activities in this area are prepared to meet their unique needs, the regions communicate through a steering committee at the NRC Head Quarters. RIV is investigating ways to share their experience in this area with the industry.

RIV staff presented three case studies and best practices in the area of the reactor oversight process (ROP). The first case study looked at a long and involved refueling outage during which major components, including the steam generators, reactor vessel head, pressurizer, main transformer and the containment sump screen were replaced. Region IV inspectors identified problems in many areas that the licensee had performed well historically.

The second case study involved a plant where a confirmatory action letter (CAL) process was completed through a successful implementation of the ROP to ensure licensee's corrective actions were effective. The third case study was with a plant where after ten years of good performance several events, allegations and inspections identified performance degradation. The RIV staff stated that the ROP provided better tools, a structured and systematic assessment process with appropriate focus to address the performance degradation, and sharing of information between the inspectors and management. The RIV inspectors also discussed the inspection best practices. The ACRS members asked many probing questions regarding the details of the region's experience in these case studies.

The RIV staff also presented their experience with recent technical challenges in the area of reactor decommissioning and independent spent fuel storage installation. The issues included a licensee's inability to find a transportation route for disposal of the old reactor pressure vessel head (Class C low level waste), missing material, and the cask handling crane issues.

In their presentation on the safety culture initiative, the RIV staff stated that in addition to evaluating for significance, an inspection finding of more than minor significance related to current performance would be evaluated to determine if it has a cross-cutting aspect. The three cross-cutting areas in ROP comprise of human performance, problem identification and

resolution, and the safety conscious work environment. Each of these areas cover multiple safety culture components. Three or more inspection findings, binned under the same cross-cutting aspect, may indicate a substantive cross-cutting issue at a plant. Significant inspection findings against individual licensed operators will be reviewed under the traditional enforcement policy as a violation of the operators' license which will not await the completion of the assessment process described above. RIV initiated a cross-cutting task group effort, expected to be complete by the end of the year, to identify the differences and similarities between the regions and seek input from the utilities regarding implementation of the cross-cutting aspects.

RIV staff shared their experience with the component design basis team inspections, its successes and challenges. RIV believes that these inspections were very effective for a deeper understanding of the design issues that may not have been identified and corrected otherwise.

In a round table discussion, RIV staff discussed how inspection findings are reviewed thru the significance determination process (SDP) in the ROP. The event itself is not evaluated for risk significance thru the SDP to determine the action matrix response, but the event initiator (e.g., reactor scram, loss of feedwater, loss of power) is evaluated for risk. The risk number is then factored into the region's decision making process to determine if a reactive or special inspection should be undertaken to better understand any performance deficiencies. The identified performance deficiencies are processed thru the SDP and evaluated for cross-cutting issues. The RIV staff shared their experience on areas of potential improvement, level of detail in risk modeling, and communicating lessons learned among the inspectors and with the industry.

The ACRS members visited the RIV incident response center, with the RIV staff.

In his closing statement, Dr Mallett pointed out that RIV revisits its programs each year and builds into the ROP process implementation. Another key element, he pointed out, was maintaining the expertise and diligence of the staff.

The ACRS Chairman and the members provided their appreciation and feedback on the region's outstanding presentations. Chairman Maynard adjourned the meeting by thanking everyone attending the meeting.