April 10, 2008

Dr. Theresa A. Maldonado, Deputy Director
Texas Engineering Experiment Station
Texas A&M University
1095 Nuclear Science Road
College Station, TX 77843-3575

SUBJECT: NRC ROUTINE INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-128/2008-201

Dear Dr. Maldonado:

On March 25-27, 2008, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conducted an inspection at your Nuclear Science Center TRIGA Research Reactor Facility. The enclosed report documents the inspection results, which were discussed on March 27, 2008, with Dr. W. D. Reece, Director of the Nuclear Science Center, and other members of your staff.

The inspection examined activities conducted under your license as they relate to safety and compliance with the Commission's rules and regulations and with the conditions of your license. The inspector reviewed selected procedures and records, observed activities, and interviewed personnel. Based on the results of this inspection, no findings of significance were identified.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's, "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter, its enclosure, and your response (if any) will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, please contact Craig Bassett at 404-358-6515.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Johnny H. Eads, Branch Chief
Research and Test Reactors Branch B
Division of Policy and Rulemaking
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-128
License No. R-83

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report No. 50-128/2008-201
cc w/encl.: Please see next page

cc:

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College Station, TX 77840-3575

Governor's Budget and
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P.O. Box 13561
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Test, Research and Training
Reactor Newsletter
202 Nuclear Sciences Center
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611

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DATE	4/7/08	4/9/08	4/10/08

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U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

Docket No:	50-128
License No:	R-83
Report No:	50-128/2008-201
Licensee:	Texas A&M University
Facility:	Texas Engineering Experiment Station Nuclear Science Center
Location:	College Station, TX
Dates:	March 25-27, 2008
Inspector:	Craig Bassett
Accompanied by:	Greg Schoenebeck
Approved by:	Johnny H. Eads, Branch Chief Research and Test Reactors Branch B Division of Policy and Rulemaking Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas A&M University
Texas Engineering Experiment Station
Inspection Report No. 50-128/2008-201

The primary focus of this routine, announced inspection was the onsite review of selected aspects of the licensee's one megawatt Class II research and test reactor safety programs including: organization and staffing, review and audit and design change functions, procedures, radiation protection, environmental protection, and transportation of radioactive material since the last NRC inspection in these areas. The licensee's programs were directed toward the protection of public health and safety and were generally in compliance with NRC requirements.

Organization and Staffing

- The licensee's organization and staffing met requirements specified in Technical Specification Section 6.0.

Review and Audit, and Design Change Functions

- The Reactor Safety Board acceptably completed review, oversight, and audit functions required by Technical Specification Section 6.2.

- The licensee's design change program was in accordance with 10 CFR 50.59 and was being implemented as required.

Radiation Protection

- Periodic surveys were completed and documented as required by procedure.

- Postings and signs met regulatory requirements.

- Personnel dosimetry was being worn as required and recorded doses were generally within the NRC's regulatory limits.

- Radiation survey and monitoring equipment was being maintained and calibrated as required.

- The Radiation Protection and ALARA Programs satisfied regulatory requirements.

- Radiation protection training was acceptable.

Environmental Protection

- Effluent monitoring satisfied license and regulatory requirements and releases were within the specified regulatory and Technical Specification limits.

Experiments

- The approval and control of experiments met Technical Specification and applicable regulatory requirements.

Transportation

- Radioactive material was being shipped in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- The training of the staff members responsible for shipping the radioactive material met DOT requirements.

REPORT DETAILS

Summary of Plant Status

The licensee's one megawatt, pool-type TRIGA research and test reactor continued to be operated in support of education, operator training, irradiation of various materials, laboratory experiments, and various types of research. During the inspection, the reactor was started, operated, and shut down as required and in accordance with applicable procedures to support these ongoing activities.

1. Organization and Staffing

a. Inspection Scope (Inspection Procedure [IP] 69001)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following regarding the licensee's organization and staffing to ensure that the requirements specified in Section 6.1 of Technical Specifications (TS), Amendment No.15, dated November 1, 1999, were being met:

- organization and staffing for the Texas A&M Nuclear Science Center (NSC)
- administrative controls and management responsibilities specified in TS Section 6.0
- Annual Report for the Texas A&M University Nuclear Science Center for 2006, dated March 23, 2007
- NSC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), Section I, Procedure C, "Administration," Revision (Rev.) 0, dated March 6, 1990

b. Observations and Findings

The structure and functions of the licensee's organization at the Texas Engineering Experimental Station (TEES), NSC Reactor Facility had not functionally changed since the last inspection (refer to NRC Inspection Report No. 50-128/2007-201). The licensee's current organizational structure and assignment of responsibilities, as reported in the Annual Report, were consistent with those specified in the TS Section 6.1.1. All positions reviewed were filled with qualified personnel. Review of records verified that management responsibilities were administered as required by TS Section 6.1.2 and applicable procedures.

c. Conclusions

Despite recent personnel losses, the licensee's organization and staffing were in compliance with the requirements specified in TS Section 6.

2. Review and Audit, and Design Change Functions

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69001)

To verify that the licensee had established and conducted reviews and audits as required in TS Section 6.2 and to determine whether modifications to the facility, if any, were consistent with 10 CFR 50.59, the inspector reviewed:

- completed audits and reviews from 2006 through 2007

- Modification Authorization (MA) Numbers (Nos.) M-57 through 60
- design changes reviewed under 10 CFR 50.59 for 2006 and 2007
- Reactor Safety Board meeting minutes from 2006 through the present
- Annual Report for the Texas A&M University Nuclear Science Center for 2006, dated March 23, 2007
- NSC SOP, Section I, Procedure H, "Reactor Safety Board," dated August 19, 2003

b. Observations and Findings

(1) Review and Audit Functions

The inspector reviewed minutes of the last two Reactor Safety Board (RSB) meetings. The minutes showed that the committee met once per calendar year as required by TS Section 6.2.2.a and that a quorum was present for each meeting. The topics considered during the meetings were appropriate and as stipulated in TS Section 6.2.3. The RSB conducted audits and reviews of the ALARA program, the emergency preparedness and security plans, and the licensee's conformance of operations to the TS and maintenance items, as required by TS Section 6.2.4 and 6.2.5. Results of the audits were reviewed by the licensee and recommendations for improvement made by the auditors were addressed by the licensee. The inspector determined that the audit findings and licensee actions taken in response to the findings were acceptable.

(2) Design Change

The inspector determined that design changes at the NSC Reactor facility required a facility staff review followed by an RSB review and subsequent approval. Four design changes had been processed during the past two years. The inspector reviewed the records and determined that the staff reviews had been performed as required and the proposed modifications had been reviewed and approved by the RSB. The systems affected were checked out prior to resumption of reactor operations. From the review, the inspector also determined that 10 CFR 50.59 reviews and approvals were focused on safety and met licensee program requirements. No safety significant issues were noted during the review and the modification did not involve a change to the TS.

c. Conclusions

The RSB acceptably completed review, oversight, and audit functions required by TS Section 6.2. The licensee's design change program was being implemented as required.

3. Radiation Protection Program

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69001)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify compliance with 10 CFR Parts 19 and 20 and TS Sections 3.5, 4.5, 5.4, and 6.6 requirements:

- Personnel dosimetry records for 2006 to 2007
- RSB meeting minutes from 2006 through the present
- RSB completed audits and reviews from 2006 through the present

- various forms associated with the procedures mentioned below from 2006 to 2007
- Annual Report for the Texas A&M University Nuclear Science Center for 2006, dated March 23, 2007
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure A-1, "Radiation Protection Program," Rev. 3, dated December 4, 1997
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure A-3, "Reporting Requirements," Rev. 2, dated December 19, 1997
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure A-6, "ALARA," Rev. 0, dated December 12, 2002
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-4, "Daily Facility Air Monitoring Check," Rev. 5, dated September 14, 2007
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-6, "Monthly Facility Air Monitoring," Rev. 4, dated September 14, 2007
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-7, "Area Radiation Monitor," Rev. 3, dated August 25, 1984
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-13, "Portable Survey Instrument Calibration and Operability Check," Rev. 4, dated September 3, 1999
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-14, "Personnel Dosimeters," Rev. 7, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-4, "Radioactive Material Retained at the NSC," Rev. 3, dated September 3, 1999
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-6, "Radioactive Material Storage," Rev. 2, dated December 19, 1997
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-10, "Radioactive Materials Handling," Rev. 2, dated December 19, 1997
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-11, "Site Survey," Rev. 2, dated September 3, 1999
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-12, "Facility Radiation Survey," Rev. 4, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-14, "Facility Contamination Surveys," Rev. 4, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure D-1, "Health Physics Training," Rev. 1, dated October 3, 1990
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure E-1, "Personnel Dosimetry," Rev. 0, April 13, 1995
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure F-1, "Facility Air Monitor Configurations," Rev. 0, dated May 10, 2000

b. Observations and Findings

(1) Surveys

The inspector reviewed selected monthly and other contamination and radiation surveys from 2006 through the present. The surveys had been completed by HP staff members as required and were documented as required by procedures. Results were evaluated and corrective actions taken when readings/results exceeded the licensee's established limit of three times background. During the inspection the inspector accompanied a licensee representative during a radiation survey in the Upper Research Level of the Reactor Building. Proper techniques were used during the survey. The radiation levels noted were comparable to those detected during previous surveys in the area and no anomalies were noted.

(2) Postings and Notices

During tours of the facility, the inspector observed that caution signs, postings and controls in the controlled areas were acceptable for the hazards involving radiation, high radiation, and contaminated areas and were posted as required by 10 CFR 20, Subpart J. Through observations of and interviews with licensee staff, the inspector confirmed that personnel complied with the signs, postings, and controls. The facility's radioactive material storage areas were noted to be properly posted. No unmarked radioactive material was detected in the facility.

Copies of current notices to workers were posted in various areas in the facility including the bulletin board in the hallway by each entrance to the facility, in the hallway of the Upper Research Level in the Reactor Building, and in the Lower Research Level of the Reactor Building. Radiological signs were typically posted at the entrances to controlled areas. Other postings also characterized the industrial hygiene hazards that were present in the areas as well. Caution signs, postings, and controls for radiation areas were as required in 10 CFR Part 20.

(3) Dosimetry

The inspector determined that the licensee used Optically Stimulated Luminescent (OSL) dosimeters for whole body monitoring of beta and gamma radiation exposure with an additional component to measure fast/thermal neutron radiation. The licensee used thermoluminescent dosimeter (TLD) finger rings for extremity monitoring. The inspector confirmed that dosimetry was being issued to staff and visitors as required by NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure E, "Personnel Dosimetry." The dosimetry was supplied and processed by a National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program accredited vendor.

An examination of the OSL and TLD results indicating exposures to radiation at the facility for the past two years showed that the highest occupational doses, as well as doses to the public, were within 10 CFR Part 20 limitations. The records showed that the highest annual whole body exposure received by a single individual for 2006 was 899 millirem (mr) deep dose equivalent (DDE) and 951 mr shallow dose equivalent (SDE). The highest annual extremity exposure for that year was 7670 mr. For 2007, the highest annual whole body exposure received by a single individual was 858 mr DDE and 909 mr SDE. The highest annual extremity exposure was 2890 mr.

Through direct observation the inspector determined that dosimetry was acceptably used by facility personnel. Also, exit frisking practices were in accordance with facility radiation protection requirements.

(4) Radiation Monitoring Equipment

The calibration and periodic checks of the portable survey meters and radiation monitoring instruments were performed by the licensee's staff, Texas A&M calibration facilities, or certified contractors. The inspector confirmed that the licensee's calibration procedures and frequencies satisfied TS Section 4.3 and 10 CFR 20.1501(b) requirements.

The inspector reviewed selected NSC instrument calibrations done during 2006 and to date in 2008, and confirmed that the calibration of the portable survey meters in use had been completed as required. All instruments checked had current calibrations appropriate for the types and energies of radiation they were used to detect and/or measure. Calibrations of the permanently installed radiation area monitors and the facility air monitors were completed in accordance with requirements specified in TS Section 4.5 and the applicable procedures.

(5) Radiation Protection Program

The licensee's Radiation Protection and ALARA programs were established in NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure A-1, "Radiation Protection Program," NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure A-6, "ALARA," and through various related HP procedures. The programs had been reviewed and approved as required. The Radiation Protection and ALARA programs contained instructions concerning organization, training, monitoring, personnel responsibilities, audits, record keeping, and reports. The ALARA program provided objectives for keeping doses as low as reasonably achievable which was consistent with the guidance in 10 CFR Part 20. The programs, as established, appeared to be generally acceptable.

It appeared that the programs had not appreciably changed since the last NRC inspection. The licensee reviewed the programs at least annually as required by 10 CFR 20.1101(c). Review and oversight was provided by the RSO with the assistance of the RSB. It was also noted that the Health Physics (HP) procedures were reviewed annually as required by procedure.

The licensee did not require or have a respiratory protection program.

(6) Radiation Work Permit Program

The inspector reviewed selected Radiation Work Permits (RWPs) that had been written, used, and closed out during 2006-2007 and selected RWPs that had been generated for use during 2007-2008. It was noted that the controls specified in the RWPs were generally acceptable and applicable for the type of work being done. The RWPs had been initiated, reviewed, and approved as required.

c. Conclusions

The inspector determined that the Radiation Protection and ALARA Programs, as implemented by the licensee, satisfied regulatory requirements because: 1) surveys were generally completed and documented acceptably to permit evaluation of the radiation hazards present; 2) postings met regulatory requirements; 3) personnel dosimetry was being worn as required and recorded doses were within the NRC's regulatory limits; 4) radiation survey and monitoring equipment was being maintained and calibrated as required; and, 5) the Radiation Protection Program satisfied regulatory requirements.

4. Environmental Protection

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69001)

The inspector reviewed the following to verify compliance with the requirements of 10 CFR Part 20 and TS Sections 3.5, 3.7, 4.5, 5.4, and 6.6:

- effluent monitoring program results for 2007
- various gamma spectrum analyses for 2007
- counting and analysis records associated with airborne releases
- various forms associated with the procedures mentioned below from 2006 to 2007
- Annual Report for the Texas A&M University Nuclear Science Center for 2006 including the effluent monitoring program results for that period
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-8, "Stack Particulate Monitor," Rev. 4, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-9, "Stack Gas (Ar-41) Monitor," Rev. 4, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-9A, "Stack Gas (Xe-125) Monitor," Rev. 1, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-10, "Reactor Building Particulate Monitor," Rev. 6, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-11, "Reactor Building Gas Monitor," Rev. 5, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-12, "Fission Product Monitor," Rev. 4, dated September 14, 2007
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure B-18, "Environmental Surveillance Program," Rev. 2, dated September 14, 2007
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-8, "Radioactive Liquid Waste System," Rev. 3, dated May 10, 2000
- NSC SOP Section VII, Procedure C-9, "Radioactive Liquid Waste Disposal," Rev. 3, dated May 10, 2000
- NSC HP Form 819a, "Radioactive Liquid Waste Disposal Record," latest form revision dated September 1998

b. Observation and Findings

On-site and off-site gamma radiation monitoring was completed using the reactor facility stack effluent monitor and area monitors, and various environmental monitoring TLDs, in accordance with the applicable procedures. Data indicated that there were no measurable doses above any regulatory limits. Observation of the facility by the inspector indicated no new potential release paths.

The inspector determined that gaseous releases continued to be monitored as required, were calculated according to established protocol, and were acceptably documented in the annual reports. The airborne concentrations of the gaseous releases were well within the annual dose constraints of 10 CFR 20.1101 (d), Appendix B concentrations, and TS limits. COMPLY code calculations indicated an effective dose equivalent to the public of 0.1 mr for 2006 and <0.1 mr for 2007.

The licensee had released liquid from the Radioactive Liquid Waste Holding Tank on various occasions during the past two years. The Radiological Safety Officer reviewed

and approved the releases after analysis proved that the releases met regulatory requirements for discharge. The principles of ALARA were acceptably implemented to minimize radioactive releases. Monitoring equipment was acceptably maintained and calibrated. Records were current and acceptably maintained.

c. Conclusion

Effluent monitoring satisfied TS and regulatory requirements and releases were within the specified regulatory limits. The environmental monitoring program was acceptable.

5. Experiments

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69001)

The inspectors reviewed selected aspects of the following in order to verify that experiments were being conducted consistent with TS Sections 3.6 and 6.4:

- NSC Reactor Operations Log Book for 2008
- experiment review and approval and potential hazards identification
- NSC Request of Services Nos. 08-078. -079, -080, -091, -093, and -096
- Annual Report for the Texas A&M University Nuclear Science Center for 2006, dated March 23, 2007
- NSC SOP Section IV-A, “Experiment Review and Approval,” Rev. 1, dated January 25, 2002
- NSC SOP Section IV-B, “Sample Handling Procedures,” Rev. 0, dated July 14, 1988
- NSC SOP Section IV-C, “Pneumatic System Operation,” Rev. 0, dated February 8, 1991
- NSC SOP Section IV-D, “Beam Port Experiments,” Rev. 2, dated September 3, 1999
- NSC SOP Section IV-E, “Irradiation Cell Experiments,” Rev. 1, dated March 2, 2001
- NSC SOP Section IV-F, “Neutron Radiography Beam Port #4,” Rev. 0, dated March 22, 1990
- NSC SOP Section IV-G, “In-Pool Irradiations,” Rev. 0, dated May 2, 1984

b. Observations and Findings

The inspector observed various in-pool irradiation experiments which were on-going during the inspection. A review of the experiment documentation indicated that they had been approved and authorized by the NSCR Director and the Chairman of the RSB in accordance with TS 6.4(a) and NSC SOP Section IV-A. The observed experiments were designated as routine experiments. The in-pool irradiation experiments had been reviewed and approved by the Duty Health Physicist and SRO on duty as required and were conducted under the cognizance of the Reactor Supervisor. The licensee estimated the reactivity worth of the experiments and recorded those values on the appropriate sheets. The inspector observed that the experiments were positioned and constrained as required. The results of the experiments were documented in the NSCR Operations Log Book and on the irradiation request forms. No new experiments had been initiated, reviewed, or approved since the last inspection.

c. Conclusions

The approval and control of experiments met TS and applicable regulatory requirements.

6. Inspection of Transportation Activities

a. Inspection Scope (IP 86740)

The inspector interviewed licensee personnel and reviewed the following records to verify compliance with regulatory and procedural requirements for shipping licensed radioactive material:

- training records of those qualified to ship radioactive material
- selected records of various types of radioactive material shipments documented on various forms including NSC Form 514, 852, and 854
- NSC SOP, Section VII, Procedure C-1, "Radioactive Material Inventory," Rev. 3, dated September 3, 1999
- NSC SOP, Section VII, Procedure C-2, "Radioactive Materials Released Off-Site," Rev. 3, dated December 14, 2004
- NSC SOP, Section VII, Procedure C-3, "Radioactive Materials Released From the NSC License," Rev. 2, dated December 12, 1997
- NSC SOP, Section VII, Procedure C-5, "Radioactive Material Received," Rev. 3, dated December 19, 1997
- NSC SOP, Section VII, Procedure C-7, "Radioactive Solid Waste Sorting," Rev. 4, dated December 14, 2004

b. Observations and Findings

Through records review and discussions with licensee personnel, the inspector determined that the licensee had shipped various types of radioactive material since the previous inspection in this area. A review of the records of selected shipments indicated that the radioisotope types and quantities were calculated and dose rates measured as required. All radioactive material shipment records reviewed by the inspector had been completed in accordance with the applicable Department of Transportation (DOT) and NRC regulations.

The inspector verified that the licensee maintained copies of shipment recipients' licenses to possess radioactive material as required and that the licenses were verified to be current prior to initiating a shipment. The training of the staff members responsible for shipping the material was also reviewed. The inspector verified that the shippers' training met DOT requirements. The training program appeared to be extensive and conducted properly.

c. Conclusions

Radioactive material was being shipped in accordance with the applicable regulations. The training of the staff members responsible for shipping the radioactive material met DOT requirements.

7. Exit Interview

The inspection scope and results were summarized on March 27, 2008, with licensee representatives. The inspector discussed the findings for each area reviewed. The licensee acknowledged the findings presented and did not identify as proprietary any of the material provided to or reviewed by the inspector during the inspection.

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Licensee

D. Hibbing	Student Worker II
B. Pack	Technician II and Material Control Coordinator
D. Reece	Director, Nuclear Science Center
J. Remlinger	Associate Director, Nuclear Science Center
L. Vasudevan	Radiation Safety Officer, Health Physics

Other Personnel

B. Kretzschmar	Assistant Chief, Support Services, Texas A&M University Police Department
E. Schneider	Chief of Police, Texas A&M University Police Department

INSPECTION PROCEDURE USED

IP 69001	Class II Research and Test Reactors
IP 86740	Inspection of Transportation Activities

ITEMS OPENED, CLOSED, AND DISCUSSED

Opened

None

Closed

None

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ALARA	As low as reasonably achievable
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DDE	Deep dose equivalent
DOT	Department of Transportation
HP	Health Physics
IP	Inspection Procedure
NSC	Nuclear Science Center
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
mr	millirem
OSL	Optically stimulated luminescent
PCN	Procedure Change Notice
RSO	Radiation Safety Officer
RSB	Reactor Safety Board
SDE	Shallow dose equivalent
TLD	Thermoluminescent dosimeter
TS	Technical Specifications
TEES	Texas Engineering Experiment Station