

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

As of: July 09, 2012
Received: July 07, 2012
Status: Pending_Post
Tracking No. 8107eeb4
Comments Due: July 07, 2012
Submission Type: Web

Docket: NRC-2012-0068
Order Modifying Licenses

6/7/2012
77FR 33779

(5)

Comment On: NRC-2012-0068-0002
Interim Staff Guidance JLD-ISG-2012-01; Compliance with Order EA-12-049, Order Modifying Licenses with Regard to Requirements for Mitigation Strategies for Beyond-Design-Basis External Events

Document: NRC-2012-0068-DRAFT-0005
Comment on FR Doc # 2012-13810

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2012 JUL -9 PM 9:26

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General Comment

See attached file(s)

Attachments

AREVA comments on ISG for Mitigating Strategies July 7 2012

SONSE Review Complete
Template = ADM-013

FRIDS = ADM-03
Att = S. Brown (att 2)

SUBJECT: Docket ID NRC–2012–0068, Interim Staff Guidance JLD–ISG–2012–01; Compliance with Order EA–12–049, Order Modifying Licenses With Regard to Requirements for Mitigation Strategies for Beyond-Design-Basis External Events

The NRC published a request for comments for the subject draft guidance in the Federal Register June 7, 2012. Comments were requested by July 7, 2012.

AREVA NP Inc. (AREVA NP), as applicant for Design Certification for the U.S. EPR™, appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Draft Guidance. We offer the following comments:

1. The Draft ISG should not be extended beyond the scope of those covered by Orders EA-049 and CLI-12-09. Recipients of Orders EA-049 and CLI-12-09 were afforded the opportunity to respond to the bases for the orders; and applicants outside the scope of Orders EA-049 and CLI-12-09 should be afforded the same opportunity. Additionally the draft ISG endorses, with exceptions, the methodologies described in industry guidance document, Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) 12-06, "Diverse and Flexible Coping Strategies (FLEX) Implementation Guide," (NEI 12-06), Revision B1. NEI 12-06 – B1 applies to Licensees, Construction Permit (CP) holders and Combined Operating License (COL) holders. The Draft ISG expands this scope to include nuclear reactor applicants.
2. The Draft ISG should clearly define performance based acceptance criteria for the three functions in Order EA-12-049 (core cooling, spent fuel cooling and containment). The ISG should accept coping strategies that manage an extended loss of AC power and loss of pumping power from the UHS without meeting entry conditions for Severe Accident Management Guidelines (SAMGs). Instead, the ISG unnecessarily prescribes deterministic surrogates for core cooling, spent fuel cooling and control of containment. Examples:
 - a. The Draft ISG requires spent fuel pool cooling rather than maintaining adequate heat removal from the spent fuel in the pool.
 - b. Staff positions should not unnecessarily complicate coping strategies by requiring control of variables within normal or even emergency operating bands if this is not actually essential to meet the acceptance criteria for very low probability BDBEEs. An example of this is the Staff position in section 3.1.2 requiring control of makeup/bleed down rates. This may not be needed by all coping strategies for all plants and could serve as a distraction from meeting the essential safety functions.
3. The Draft ISG and the endorsed NEI guidance use a number of terms, and definitions that remain subject to interpretation:
 - a. The Draft ISG should replace the phrase "loss of power, motive force, and normal access to the ultimate heat sink" with "loss of the ability to transfer heat to the ultimate heat sink". While the Order uses the term 'motive force', AREVA would have asked for clarification if we had been subject to the Order. We believe the term 'motive force' could be improperly construed to include gravity, stored pneumatic energy, or even human energy, thus precluding any mitigating strategy.
 - b. Other terms and definitions subject to various interpretations include 'robust', 'baseline coping capability', 'onsite FLEX equipment', and 'FLEX capability' (for example, is FLEX capability the capability of baseline coping plus the additional coping possible with FLEX strategies, or just the coping with FLEX strategies alone?)
4. The Significance Determination Process (SDP) associated with this ISG should be developed concurrently with this ISG to ensure focus on the significant inspection characteristics. The SDP should also be offered for public comment.

5. Some Staff positions are overly limited in scope or incomplete. Examples:
- a. While the ISG is intended to provide 'one acceptable approach' to meeting requirements, alternatives will be evaluated by the Staff on a 'case by case basis'. We believe regulatory efficiencies could be accrued if Staff positions accepted some expected alternatives on a generic basis. For example, one of the methods to provide reasonable protection in NEI 12-06, endorsed by the ISG, is to use design loads based on or evaluated equivalent to a certain ASCE standard. The Staff position should endorse the NEI use of the ASCE standard with the provision that codes that have been previously accepted for establishing building loads for the plant in question should be considered 'equivalent' for the purposes of the ISG.
 - b. Staff positions for Section 5.1 of the ISG are incomplete in that they address only some of the addressee plants. (i.e., a staff position for some BWRs and not others).
 - c. The ISG should clearly state that the electrical distribution system can be relied upon if protected in accordance with the plant's design basis.
 - d. Staff positions for Section 5.1 of the ISG need to be flexible enough to allow for heat removal methods other than containment spray based on plant features and designs.

If you have any questions related to these comments on the ISG, please contact Mr. David K. White, Corporate Regulatory Affairs. He may be reached by telephone at 434-832-4027 or by e-mail at david.white@areva.com.