NRC NEWS
U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION I

475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406

CONTACT: Diane Screnci (610)337-5330/ e-mail: dps@nrc.gov
Neil A. Sheehan (610)337-5331/e-mail: nas@nrc.gov

or vld@nrc.gov

I-96-58 September 4, 1996
Contact: Diane Screnci FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Victor Dricks

NRC SENDS AUGMENTED INSPECTION TEAM TO HADDAM NECK NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has sent an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) to look into the circumstances surrounding events at the Haddam Neck nuclear power plant in Haddam, Connecticut. The team began its work yesterday.

Over the weekend, the licensee responded to multiple events, which occurred with the plant shut down. The licensee discovered seepage from a valve in the residual heat removal (RHR) system, which is designed to control the temperature of the reactor coolant system during shutdowns and refueling operations. While trying to find the source of the seepage, they found indications one of the RHR pumps was not operable.

In a separate event, operators also found that nitrogen from the volume control tank was leaking through a closed valve into the reactor coolant system, forming a bubble at the top of the vessel. Operators found the condition while preparing to remove the reactor head during a refueling outage. They responded by stopping the nitrogen leak and adding water to stabilize water level in the reactor. There is no indication the event adversely affected the reactor coolant system.

Because the events are complex and the probable causes are difficult to understand, the NRC staff has sent six inspectors to the site to review the causes and safety implications.

The team has been directed to develop a sequence of events; assess the shutdown risk and recovery actions available to the operators; assess the quality of the operator actions, procedures, and training; assess the operator actions taken to identify and respond to the events; assess the quality and timeliness of the response by Haddam Neck management; conduct a root cause analysis; and review these events for generic implications. The team will issue a report in about 30 days.