

CATEGORY 1

REGULATORY INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (RIDS)

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SUBJECT: Special rept:on 910816,initial investigation results,
 revealed reduced power levels higher than normal background
 noise levels caused Channels 5 & 6 to generate large number
 of alarms.Alarm setpoints for Channels 5 & 6 raised.

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NIAGARA MOHAWK

GENERATION
BUSINESS GROUP

NINE MILE POINT NUCLEAR STATION/LAKE ROAD, P.O. BOX 63, LYCOMING, NEW YORK 13093

December 6, 1996
NMP2L 1678

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Attn: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

RE: Nine Mile Point Unit 2
Docket No. 50-410
NPF-69

Subject: Loose Parts Monitoring System

Gentlemen:

On August 16, 1991, Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NMPC) submitted a Special Report in accordance with Nine Mile Point Unit 2 (NMP2) Technical Specification, Section 3.3.7.8 ACTION Statement (a) regarding the inoperability of the Loose Parts Monitoring System (LPM). The report described initial investigation results which revealed that at reduced power levels higher than normal background noise levels caused channels 5 and 6 to generate a large number of alarms. As a result, the computer locked up preventing other alarms from annunciating in the control room. The cause of this higher than normal background noise level was determined to be increased hydraulic noise during periods of reduced reactor recirculation flow.

The report also described actions taken to resolve the issue and return the LPM to service. Specifically, the NMPC Engineering Department initiated a Simple Design Change modifying the Loose Parts Computer to cause it to reboot upon processor lockup. This change allowed all alarms to be passed directly to the control room annunciator. Additionally, the alarm setpoints for channels 5 and 6 were raised to eliminate the alarms generated during reduced power operation. These corrective actions were completed in September 1991 during a plant shutdown.

On October 2, 1991, during the subsequent plant startup with the reactor operating at approximately 52% of rated thermal power, it was determined that the LPM corrective action of raising the setpoints had been ineffective, in that the loose parts computer was again locked up. Since the problem of nuisance alarms still existed at reduced power, the LPM was not returned to an operable status following the changes noted above.

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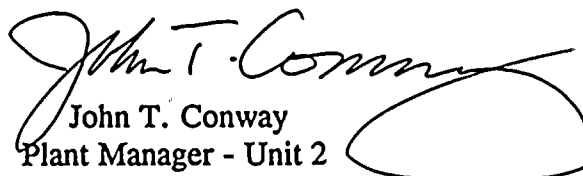
On November 8, 1991, NMPC submitted an additional Special Report regarding the inoperability of the LPM System. While this report was not legally required since the LPM was never returned to an operable status, it did serve to status the initial actions, and define continuing actions to resolve the LPM reliability problems.

Since that time, NMPC has been engaged in a series of additional troubleshooting and corrective action efforts with various vendors. Until recently, the corrective actions taken had not been effective in preventing the nuisance alarms from occurring at reduced power levels. However, since the high background noise level occurs at reduced power levels, the LPM System has been capable of performing its function except at reactor power levels less than rated.

Recently, NMPC engineering personnel conducted a review of NRC Regulatory Guide 1.133, "Loose Part Detection Program for the Primary System of Light-Water-Cooled Reactors." This review resulted in a determination that the four Reactor Recirculation Loop LPM sensors, channels 3, 4, 5, and 6, were not needed to meet the guidance specified in Regulatory Guide 1.133. Specifically, these sensors are located at points in the piping that are not considered natural collection points. Based on that determination, NMPC has developed, installed, and tested a modification in accordance with 10 CFR 50.59 and plant procedures to improve the LPM system operation by disabling the alarm functions of channels 3, 4, 5, and 6, while allowing their use in performance analysis and diagnosis of recirculation loop problems.

NMPC completed the necessary modifications to the LPM on October 9, 1996 during refuel outage 5 (RFO5). The system was successfully post-modification tested on October 22, 1996. NMPC has monitored LPM system performance throughout power ascension following RFO5, and has now concluded that the system will function reliably in accordance with its design. Consequently, the LPM has been restored to an operable status.

Very truly yours,


John T. Conway
Plant Manager - Unit 2

JTC/TWR/WDB/kap

xc: Mr. H. J. Miller, NRC Regional Administrator
Mr. S. S. Bajwa, Acting Director, Project Directorate I-1, NRR
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