

CATEGORY 2

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 FACIL: 50-397 WPPSS Nuclear Project, Unit 2, Washington Public Powe 05000397
 AUTH. NAME AUTHOR AFFILIATION
 BROCKMAN, K.E. Region 4 (Post 820201)
 RECIP. NAME RECIPIENT AFFILIATION
 PARRISH, J.V. Washington Public Power Supply System

SUBJECT: Forwards insp rept 50-397/96-16 on 960731-0809 & NOV.

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 400
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064

SEP 12 1996

EA 96-343

J. V. Parrish, Chief Executive Officer
Washington Public Power Supply System
3000 George Washington Way
P.O. Box 968, MD 1023
Richland, Washington 99352

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT 50-397/96-16 AND NOTICE OF VIOLATION

Dear Mr. Parrish:

An NRC inspection was conducted July 31 through August 9, 1996, at your Washington Nuclear Project-2 reactor facility. The enclosed report presents the scope and results of that inspection.

The inspection focused on two recent events, an error in calculating an estimated critical position resulting in an unanticipated early criticality, and the inadvertent manipulation of the reactor recirculation control system by a nonlicensed person. Both events involved errors in the command and control of activities that could directly affect reactivity. The early criticality event involved multiple procedural noncompliances and both events also involved procedures that were inadequate to the circumstances. Additionally, in both events, there appeared to be a reluctance of your engineering and operations staff to raise significant potential problems to upper management. These concerns warrant close attention by your facility management. Further, your incident review board investigations appeared narrowly focused and did not identify a number of relevant root causes and findings identified by the NRC. This information is contrary to our previous understandings related to your claimed improvements in your self-evaluations.

During the inspection, two violations were identified that were ancillary to our main concern of command and control. These violations are cited in the enclosed Notice of Violation (Notice) and the circumstances surrounding the violations are described in detail in the enclosed report. Please note that you are required to respond to this letter and should follow the instructions specified in the enclosed Notice when preparing your response. The NRC will use your response, in part, to determine whether further enforcement action is necessary to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

In addition, three apparent violations were identified and are being considered for escalated enforcement action in accordance with the "General Statement of Policy and Procedure for NRC Enforcement Actions" (Enforcement Policy), NUREG-1600. These apparent violations involved procedural noncompliances related to the command and control of reactivity manipulation activities and failures to establish procedures appropriate to the

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circumstances. Accordingly, no Notice of Violation is presently being issued for these inspection findings. In addition, please be advised that the number and characterization of apparent violations described in the enclosed inspection report may change as a result of further NRC review.


A predecisional enforcement conference to discuss these apparent violations will be scheduled for early October 1996. The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. This conference is being held to obtain information to enable the NRC to make an enforcement decision, such as a common understanding of the facts, root causes, missed opportunities to identify the apparent violation sooner, corrective actions, significance of the issues and the need for lasting and effective corrective action. In particular, we expect you to address command and control issues related to both events and those actions you have taken to preclude the recurrence of similar future events. Further, we would like to discuss your incident review process to better understand the related inspection findings and those actions you have or are taking to ensure more comprehensive self-evaluations. In addition, this is an opportunity for you to point out any errors in our inspection report and for you to provide any information concerning your perspectives on 1) the severity of the violations, 2) the application of the factors that the NRC considers when it determines the amount of a civil penalty that may be assessed in accordance with Section VI.B.2 of the Enforcement Policy, and 3) any other application of the Enforcement Policy to this case, including the exercise of discretion in accordance with Section VII. This conference will be open to public observation in accordance with the Commission's continuing trial program as discussed in the enclosed excerpt from the Enforcement Policy (Enclosure 3). Although not required, we encourage you to provide your comments on how you believe holding this conference open to public observation affected your presentation and your communications with the NRC.

You will be advised by separate correspondence of the results of our deliberations on this matter. No response regarding these apparent violations is required at this time.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter, its enclosure(s), and your response will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR). To the extent possible, your response should not include any personal privacy, proprietary, or safeguards information so that it can be placed in the PDR without redaction.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, we will be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,


Kenneth E. Brockman, Acting Director
Division of Reactor Safety



Washington Public Power
Supply System

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Docket No.: 50-397
License No.: NPF-21

Enclosures:

1. Notice of Violation
2. NRC Inspection Report
50-397/96-16
3. Enforcement Policy: Section V,
"Predecisional Enforcement Conferences"

cc w/enclosures:

Frederick S. Adair, Chairman
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
P.O. Box 43172
Olympia, Washington 98504-3172

Chairman
Benton County Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 69
Prosser, Washington 99350-0190

Mr. Paul R. Bemis (Mail Drop PE20)
Vice President, Nuclear Operations
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Rodney L. Webring (Mail Drop PE08)
Vice President, Operations Support/PIO
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Greg O. Smith (Mail Drop 927M)
WNP-2 Plant General Manager
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. David A. Swank (Mail Drop PE20)
Manager, Regulatory Affairs
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Washington Public Power
Supply System

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D

Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Al E. Mouncer (Mail Drop 396)
Chief Counsel
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Ms. Lourdes C. Fernandez (Mail Drop PE20)
Manager, Licensing
Washington Public Power Supply System
P.O. Box 968
Richland, Washington 99352-0968

Mr. Malcolm H. Phillips, Jr., Esq.
Winston & Strawn
1400 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3502

E-Mail report to D. Nelson (DJN)
 E-Mail report to NRR Event Tracking System (IPAS)

bcc to DMB (IE01)

bcc distrib. by RIV:

L. J. Callan	Resident Inspector
DRP Director	DRS-PSB
Branch Chief (DRP/E, WCFO)	MIS System
Senior Project Inspector (DRP/E, WCFO)	RIV File
Branch Chief (DRP/TSS)	M. Hammond (PAO, WCFO)
Leah Tremper (OC/LFDCB, MS: TWFN 9E10)	
G. F. Sanborn, EO	
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E-Mail report to D. Nelson (DJN)
 E-Mail report to NRR Event Tracking System (IPAS)

bcc to DMB (IE01)

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