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SUBJECT: Special Rept 2-SR-88-009: on 881206, condenser vacuum pump/gland seal exhaust monitors declared inoperable.

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192-00441-JGH/TDS/RJR
January 9, 1989

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRC Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Sirs:

Subject: Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS)
Unit 2
Docket No. STN 50-529 (License No. NPF-51)
Special Report 2-SR-88-009
File: 89-020-404

Attached please find Special Report 2-SR-88-009 prepared and submitted pursuant to Technical Specifications 3.3.3.8 and 6.9.2. This report discusses the inoperability of RU-142 and RU-144.

If you have any questions, please contact T. D. Shriver, Compliance Manager at (602) 393-2521.

Very truly yours,

J. G. Haynes
Vice President
Nuclear Production

JGH/TDS/RJR/kj

Attachment

cc: D. B. Karner (all w/attachments)
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INPO Records Center

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PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Radiation Monitoring Unit Inoperable for Greater Than 72 Hours

License No. NPF-51

Docket No. STN 50-529

Special Report 2-SR-88-009

This Special Report is submitted in accordance with Technical Specifications 3.3.3.8 ACTION 42(b) and 6.9.2 for an event in which the Condenser Vacuum Pump/Gland Seal Exhaust High Range Effluent Monitor (RU-142) and Plant Vent High Range Effluent Monitor (RU-144) were inoperable for greater than 72 hours. The 72 hour limit for operability was exceeded at approximately 0700 MST and 0630 MST respectively on December 9, 1988.

At approximately 0630 MST on December 6, 1988, with Palo Verde Unit 2 in Mode 1 (POWER OPERATION) at approximately 100 percent power, the Condenser Vacuum Pump/Gland Seal Exhaust low and high range monitors (RU-141 and RU-142) were declared inoperable due to intermittent spiking on the low range monitor.

At approximately 0700 MST on December 6, 1988 the Plant Vent Monitor (RU-143 and RU-144) were also declared inoperable due to intermittent spiking on the low range monitor.

In each case the monitors work as a pair with RU-141 and RU-143 as the low range monitors and RU-142 and RU-144 as the high range monitors. Normal configuration consists of the low range monitors operating with the high range monitors in standby. When the low range monitors reach their maximum range, the high range starts and the low range detector and electronics are isolated. The high range monitors are provided for tracking radioactive effluents during postulated accident scenarios. The high range monitors must be declared inoperable when the low range monitors are inoperable.

Pursuant to Technical Specification 3.3.3.8 ACTION 37, the Preplanned Alternate Sampling Program (PASP) was initiated at approximately 0712 MST and 0645 respectively on December 6, 1988. Implementation of the PASP will continue until the radiation monitoring units are returned to service.

The term "spiking" as used in this report is defined as an apparent rise in current level which is causing the radiation level to appear to increase although no actual rise in radiation exists.

ANPP has been experiencing these spikes since licensing of the units. In each case previously, actions were taken to troubleshoot and correct the problems as they occurred. Additionally, overall recommendations were made and plant changes instituted on the basis of the spiking being caused by a grounding problem. When incorporated into the units, these plant changes have not fully resolved the spiking problem.

On December 6, 1988, a decision was made to leave RU-141 and RU-143 inoperable in Unit 2 for troubleshooting to determine and correct the root cause. The troubleshooting efforts to date have been directed at determining the initiating cause of the spiking by modifying the noble gas detector in RU-143. This has been accomplished by:

- 1) Supplying control power from a source independent of the other detectors.
- 2) Isolating any cabling common with the other detectors.

This action is being done with the objective of localizing the initiating event. To date this effort has not been effective in determining the cause. Due to the recurring nature of this problem, ANPP expects to continue its troubleshooting in an effort to locate and correct the cause. Additionally, when the cause is corrected, ANPP will evaluate the corrective action to improve reliability in the Unit 1 and Unit 3 monitors.

