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April 16, 2019

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D. C. 20555-001  
Attn: Document Control Desk

**Subject:** GEH VNC Written Follow-Up Report – NTR Not Properly Secured

**References:** 1) NRC License R-33, Docket 50-73  
2) GEH Event Report 53983, 4/5/19  
3) Vallecitos Nuclear Center (VNC) Technical Specifications for the R-33 Nuclear Test Reactor (NTR), 5/15/07

Dear Sir or Madam:

In accordance with NTR Technical Specification Section 6.6.2(a)(2) Special Reports, GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy Americas, LLC (GEH) hereby submits a written follow-up report for Event Notification 53983 that was provided to NRC on April 5, 2019 (Reference 2). As discussed in the initial event report, GEH reported a discovery that the NTR facility control room console had not been properly secured.

Additional information is provided as follows:

**Event Details and Safety Significance**

On 4/4/19 at approximately 1250 PDT, it was discovered that the NTR facility control room console had not been properly secured at the Vallecitos Nuclear Center.

According to license technical specifications and internal procedures, the console key, required to start up the reactor, is considered properly secured when either in the custody of the licensed operator or when stored in the approved locked safe. Contrarily, at 1250 PDT, the licensed operator exited and locked the control room but failed to remove the console key from the console lock switch and store it in the designated safe. At the time, the reactor was shut down and the console lock switch was in the off position.

No personnel entered the control room until 1345 PDT when an authorized Radiation Monitoring Technician entered, discovered the key, and immediately notified a licensed operator.

No unsafe condition existed; however, the event was reported to the NRC pursuant to an inadequacy of an administrative or procedural control in NTR Technical Specification 6.2.2(a)(2) because availability of the key to an unlicensed and unsupervised individual could have caused the existence or development of an unsafe condition with regard to reactor operations.

**Immediate Action Taken**

- 1) The key was immediately placed in the possession of a licensed operator.
- 2) The Senior Reactor Operator licensed manager and the Site Manager were notified
- 3) The event was reported to the NRC as required by NTR Technical Specification Section 6.6.2.

**Probable Cause of Event**

A preliminary investigation determined that the event was caused by a human performance error.

**Short Term and Interim Corrective Actions**

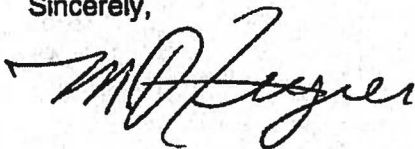
- 1) Condition Report # 31168 was initiated in the GEH Corrective Action Program to track additional investigation findings, causes, and corrective and preventive actions.
- 2) The key was attached to a large, highly visible key chain.
- 3) A flagging system was implemented whereby a flag is attached to the key when it is in the storage safe and is separated from the key and hung on the hasp outside the control room door whenever the key is removed from the safe.
- 4) An independent review of the event as required by NTR Technical Specification Section 6.2.3 is in progress.

**Longer Term Corrective Action**

- 1) Additional actions are being evaluated as a part of the corrective action program.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (925) 918-6018.

Sincerely,



Matt Feyrer, Site Manager  
Vallecitos Nuclear Center

Attachments: None

cc: NRC Region IV Administrator  
D. Hardesty, NRC NRR/DPR  
MJF 19-007