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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION I
631 PARK AVENUE
KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19406

Docket Nos. 50-289
50-320

SEP 10 1979

Metropolitan Edison Company
ATTN: Mr. J. G. Herbein
Vice President
P. O. Box 542
Reading, Pennsylvania 19603

Gentlemen:

The enclosed Circular No. 79-18 is forwarded to you for information. No written response is required. Should you have any questions related to your understanding of the recommendations on this matter, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Grier
for Boyce H. Grier
Director

Enclosures:

1. IE Circular No. 79-18
2. List of IE Circulars Issued in Last Six Months

cc w/encls:

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ENCLOSURE 1

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

IE Circular No. 79-18
Date: September 10, 1979
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PROPER INSTALLATION OF TARGET ROCK SAFETY-RELIEF VALVES

Description of Circumstances:

As a result of NRC monitoring of operating experiences involving the Target Rock safety-relief valve, two potential problems have been identified. One potential problem is that the performance of the valve has been found to be impaired by either excessive or insufficient insulation around the valve body when installed in its service environment. The other potential problem is that improper assembly of the modified valve can result in inoperability of the remote air actuator.

The Target Rock safety-relief valve is a dual purpose valve in that overpressure response is provided by pilot valve action and automatic depressurization (ADS) is provided by a remote air actuator. Valve operation has been found to be affected by the amount of insulation placed around the valve body. A previous IE Bulletin No. 76-06 was issued on July 21, 1976 as a result of operating experiences where excessive insulation was installed on the valve. The excessive insulation caused excessive heat to be retained producing a higher temperature environment for the elastomeric diaphragm which resulted in accelerated deterioration of the elastomer. Failure of the elastomeric diaphragm, makes the valve inoperable in the power-operation mode (i.e. manual and ADS). Subsequently, a silicone-nomex diaphragm was developed by the manufacturer to provide a longer life in high temperature environments. In addition, the IE Bulletin explicitly required that insulation be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

A recent licensee event report from the Monticello facility identified a potential problem resulting from insufficient insulation (i.e. just opposite of the condition addressed by IE Bulletin 76-06). During the performance of special testing of the response to safety-relief valve operation, a valve was discovered to be exceeding its design delay time for opening. Subsequent inspection and testing of the valve revealed that insufficient insulation may cause condensation to accumulate in the results in delaying the opening of the m

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