



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
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ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76012

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May 22, 1979

Mr. L. C. Lessor, Superintendent
Cooper Nuclear Station
Post Office Box 98
Brownville, Nebraska 68321

Gentlemen:

As a result of the recent accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station (TMI), the NRC has been reviewing the arrangements for immediate notification by licensees and the communications available during emergencies. The initial notification from TMI was delayed due to several difficulties. When concern was raised about evacuation, the telephone lines into the area around TMI became saturated and alternate telephone arrangements had to be found.

American Telephone and Telegraph Company, the local telephone companies, and the White House were extremely helpful in re-establishing and expanding the telephone communications system between the site, NRC Headquarters, and the Regional Office in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, during the acute phase of incident recovery. However, communications were limited while these lines were being worked on. This experience clearly demonstrates the need to pre-establish a limited number of direct and dedicated telephone lines at all sites where there is the possibility of a nuclear incident to facilitate the initial notification and to assure continuing communication.

In that regard, the NRC has already taken steps to assure that there will be an individual available at any time to receive a call from any nuclear facility. As a further step to facilitate an immediate notification and to assure continued and uninterrupted communications with licensees, the NRC is arranging to install special telephones at all operating nuclear power plants and selected fuel facilities.

There will be two direct and dedicated lines to each site. One line will be for operations and will be configured in such a manner that when the telephone is lifted from the cradle it will automatically ring in the NRC Operations Center, Bethesda, Maryland, and the appropriate Regional Office. For nuclear power plant sites, there will be extensions in, at least, each unit's control room, the shift supervisor's office, and any alternate emergency operations center. Fuel facility locations would be in the Plant Manager's Office, primary alarm station, and the designated relocation station.

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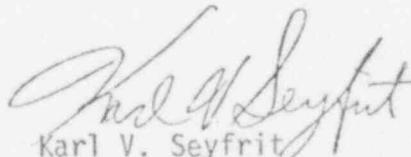
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The second direct and dedicated line would be for health physics' needs during an emergency. This would be a dial-up line, not automatic ringing, which would also tie together the site, NRC Headquarters, and the Regional Office. For most facilities, extensions would be needed in the main health physics office, emergency operations center, and any alternate emergency operations centers.

We are now preparing a proposed amendment to NRC regulations which would cover this request. Besides any discussion on the need for and placement of these telephone lines, it is anticipated that the Statement of Consideration would touch on the question of who will pay the continuing charges for these telephone lines. The NRC believes, however, that in the best interest of the public, installation should not be delayed pending settlement of the question of financial responsibility. Therefore, NRC will pay for the installation and service charges at least until a final rule can be promulgated.

In the meantime, we anticipate that each licensee will cooperate with the NRC and the local telephone companies in allowing these lines to be installed, as soon as feasible. If you have any questions concerning these telephone lines, please contact Mr. W. E. Vetter of my staff, telephone number (817) 334-2800.

Sincerely,


Karl V. Seyfrit
Director

cc: Mr. J. H. Pilant, Director
Licensing & Quality Assurance
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