



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
REGION III  
799 ROOSEVELT ROAD  
GLEN ELLYN, ILLINOIS 60137

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Docket No. 50-329  
Docket No. 50-330

NOV 5 1979

Consumers Power Company  
ATTN: Mr. Stephen H. Howell  
Vice President  
1945 West Parnall Road  
Jackson, MI 49201

Gentlemen:

This Information Notice is provided as an early notification of a possibly significant matter. It is expected that recipients will review the information for possible applicability to their facilities. No specific action or response is requested at this time. If further NRC evaluations so indicate, an IE Circular, Bulletin, or NRR Generic Letter will be issued to recommend or request specific licensee actions. If you have questions regarding the matter, please contact the Director of the appropriate NRC Regional Office.

Sincerely,

*James G. Keppler*  
James G. Keppler  
Director

Enclosure: IE Information  
Notice No. 79-26

cc w/encl:  
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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

November 5, 1979

IE Information Notice No. 79-26

BREACH OF CONTAINMENT INTEGRITY

Description of Circumstances:

On September 14, 1979, the Consumers Power Company (CPC) notified the NRC of discovery at the Palisades Nuclear Generating Plant of a valve misalignment that had resulted in containment integrity being breached for an indeterminate length of time.

While preparing to perform a Type "C" leak test between two manual valves in a 3" bypass line around the main 48" containment purge valve, plant personnel discovered that both of these manual isolation valves were locked in the open position. These valves should have been locked closed. Investigation by the licensee indicated that the valves may have been improperly positioned since April, 1978, when an efficiency test of the bypass line filters was performed. The plant has operated at power for the major portion of that time period.

The valve misalignment had no actual impact on the public health. However, in the event of a design basis accident wherein fuel damage and release of primary coolant inside the containment are postulated, the open valves would provide a significant path for a radioactive release from the containment.

The initial design purpose for the bypass system was to provide a long term hydrogen control capability for the containment atmosphere following a design basis accident. It was intended that after approximately 30 days following an accident, when containment pressure and activity levels dropped sufficiently to permit venting, this system would be manually valved to vent the containment atmosphere, through high efficiency and charcoal filters, to the exhaust stack. Thus the components in the bypass line beyond the two manual isolation valves were not designed for the severe service they would be exposed to with the valves open during the initial pressure surge of the design basis accident, and significant uncontrolled release would result. High radiation in the vicinity of the bypass line would also make immediate closing of the manual isolation valves, even if identified as the source of leakage, an extremely hazardous operation.

The principal cause for this event was inadequacy of the procedures addressing proper use and positioning of these valves. The master containment integrity valve line-up checklist, which is perfo

1/ Current NRC requirements call for 1  
hydrogen buildup. Palisades has recomt

DUPLICATE DOCUMENT

Entire document previously  
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No. of pages: 4

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