

POOR ORIGINAL

MAY 13 1975

Docket No. 50-289

Honorable Richard S. Schweiker  
United States Senate

Dear Senator Schweiker:

Your note of April 28, 1975 has been referred to me for reply. You had forwarded to us a copy of a letter dated April 13, 1975 from Ms. Jane L. Donahue who seeks information on several safety-related concerns regarding the operation of Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit 1. Our response to these matters raised by Ms. Donahue is contained in the enclosures to this letter.

If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

A. Giambusso

A. Giambusso, Director  
Division of Reactor Licensing  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:

1. Responses to Questions from Ms. Jane L. Donahue
2. "NRC Makes Wide Dissemination of Reports by Nuclear Facility Licensees"
3. "The Safety of Nuclear Power Reactors (Light Water Cooled) and Related Facilities", WASH-1250, July 1973
4. Letter to Senator Richard S. Schweiker from Ms. Jane L. Donahue dated April 13, 1975

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ENCLOSURE 1

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM MS. JANE L. DONAHUE

1. The Necessity for Performing Radiation Emergency Drills:

The probability of the occurrence of an accident, which leads to a serious level of radioactive contamination, has been analyzed and found to be extremely small. However, with regard to the health and safety of the public, it is considered prudent to require all reactor licensees to conduct such tests. This requirement is set forth in Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 50, Appendix E, Section IV entitled "Content of Emergency Plans".

2. Shutdown of Three Mile Island Unit 1 (TMI-1) on April 9, 1975:

Metropolitan Edison has informed us that the shutdown of TMI-1 on April 9, 1975 was due to a mechanical problem involving a Control Rod Drive Mechanism (CRDM). This is not an unexpected type of malfunction and continued operation is permitted, under the Operating License, with a single CRDM inoperable. With regard to the case in question on April 9, 1975, Metropolitan Edison elected to shutdown TMI-1 rather than alter their mode of operation, as required by their Operating License, following the determination that a CRDM is inoperable.

3. The Reporting of Abnormal Occurrences at TMI-1:

An "abnormal occurrence" is defined in the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 as "an unscheduled incident or event which the Commission determines is significant from the standpoint of public health and safety". Abnormal Occurrences at TMI-1 are reported by the licensee and, as required, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has made such information available in Public Document Rooms located at 1717 H Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20555, and the State Library of Pennsylvania, Box 1601, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126. The current NRC policy on such reports is contained in Enclosure 2 entitled "NRC Makes Wide Dissemination of Reports by Nuclear Facility Licensees".

4. General Safety Concerns:

The newspaper articles forwarded with Ms. Donahue's letter address a wide range of safety concerns. Enclosure 3 to our response contains a report entitled "The Safety of Nuclear Power Reactors (Light Water-Cooled) and Related Facilities" which provides information pertinent to these concerns.

**UNITED STATES**  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
**WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555**

No. 75-70  
Contact: Clare Miles  
Tel. 301/492-7771

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Monday, March 31, 1975)

**NRC MAKES WIDE DISSEMINATION OF REPORTS  
BY NUCLEAR FACILITY LICENSEES**

Information on all events at nuclear facilities which are required to be reported by licensees is being made available to the public in 122 locations across the nation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said today. This wide dissemination of information on such occurrences is part of the NRC's implementation of provisions of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974.

The Act requires the NRC to provide as wide dissemination as reasonably possible of certain information on "abnormal occurrences." The law defines an "abnormal occurrence" as "an unscheduled incident or event which the Commission determines is significant from the standpoint of public health and safety."

NRC regulations require licensee reporting of many events for a variety of purposes. Several categories of reports come within the new statutory standard while others do not. Those to be reported cover a variety of events ranging, for example, from the failure of an operator to make appropriate log entries to quality assurance problems and equipment malfunctions. As a matter of past practice, all have been called "abnormal occurrences."

More than half (888) of the "abnormal occurrences" reported in 1974 were of little significance in terms of safe operation of the nuclear power plants, and none of the more than 1400 events had any impact on public health and safety. NRC now is reviewing the categories of required licensee reports to determine, in the context of the statutory definition, the changes which should be made in the present reporting and dissemination system. The public will be given opportunity to comment on any proposed changes.

The NRC routinely places reports from licensees in its Public Document Room in Washington, D.C., and in the local public document room which contains files on the nearby facility.

Pending action on the proposed changes, NRC plans to supplement its distribution activities by sending to 122 local public document rooms every two weeks, a computer printout of all occurrence reports by facility licensees for the preceding 15-day period.

These public files are located in 39 states and Puerto Rico where nuclear power plants either are in operation, under construction, or for which construction permit applications are pending.

The computer printouts will contain information on the date and place of each occurrence and the nature and probable consequence. Information on the cause of each occurrence and on any action taken to prevent a recurrence will be provided as soon as it is received by NRC. Additional summary information will be included in the quarterly report to Congress on "abnormal occurrences" which is required by the law.



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FROM Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (Pa.,	CONTROL NUMBER 8628	FILE LOCATION
	DATE OF DOCUMENT 4/28/75	ACTION COMPLETION DEADLINE 5/8/75
TO NRC	ACTION PROCESSING DATES Acknowledged _____ Interim Reply _____ Final <u>5/13/75</u>	PREPARE FOR SIGNATURE OF: _____ Chairman _____ Director of Regulation Giambusso

DESCRIPTION    Ltr     Original     Copy     Other

Encl ltr fm Jane L. Donahue re the shut down of Three Mile Island

Encls: newspaper clippings

REMARKS

LPDR? No per note

Return enclosure with reply

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