CURRENT EVENTS

POWER REACTORS

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR
REGULATORY
COMMISSION

THIS COMPILATION OF SELECTED EVENTS IS PREPARED TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON OPERATING EXPERIENCE AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS IN A TIMELY MANNER AND AS OF A FIXED DATE. THESE EVENTS ARE SELECTED FROM PUBLIC INFORMATION SOURCES. NRC HAS, OR IS TAKING CONTINUOUS ACTION ON THESE ISSUES AS APPLICABLE, FROM AN INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT, LICENSING AND GENERIC REVIEW STANDPOINT.

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Potts EXHIBIT 2
FOR IDENTIFICATION
7/21/78 S. McCRYSTAL

OPERATOR ERROR

On January 11, 1977 while the Fort Calhoun Station Unit 1 was operating, water from the Refueling Water Storage Tank was pumped into the containment through the containment spray header due to an operator error.

During the performance of a quarterly test of the safety injection and containment spray pumps, the operator noticed an increase in the containment sump level approximately ten minutes after the low pressure safety injection pump had been started. Approximately 3300 gallons of water had been pumped to the containment. About one minute later the ventilation isolation actuation signal was received. At this time the operator realized he had failed to follow the surveillance procedures and had left the discharge valve of the low head safety injection pump open. He immediately secured the pump.

The Reactor Coolant System was checked for leakage and containment entry was made approximately one hour later. Inspection revealed that a discharge from the containment spray nozzles had occurred. A few minutes later power reduction was started. A second containment entry was made about an hour later, after containment air samples confirmed that a full face mask would provide adequate respiratory protection for the levels of radioactivity in the building. A detailed inspection revealed no serious deficiencies and no electrical grounds; the power reduction was terminated at a power level of 83%.

Although the operator had not followed the procedure and the discharge valve was open, the containment spray header isolation valve (HCV-345)

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and the low pressure safety injection to containment spray header cross-connect valve (HCV-335) should have prevented the event. The electric/pneumatic converter on HCV-345 had failed and both red and green position indication lights were on, indicating the valve was partially open. Prior to the event the auxiliary Building Equipment Operator had taken local control of the valve in an attempt to completely close the valve. After about 1/2 inch of stem travel, the operator removed the valve pin and the valve went back to its previous position as demanded by the valve positioner. The third valve (HCV-335) in the incident had a leakage problem that had been previously identified but no corrective action had been taken.

The pneumatic relay on valve HCV-345 was replaced and valve HCV-335 repaired. Valve HCV-344 and HCV-345 are now required to be placed in the test mode prior to operating the low pressure safety injection pump or contain spray pump for testing. This mode along with verification of an annunciator will ensure that both of these valves are in the fully closed position prior to pump operation.

VALVE MALFUNCTIONS

1. Primary System Depressurization

On September 24, 1977, Davis Besse Nuclear Power Station Unit No. 1 experienced a depressurization when a pressurizer power relief valve failed in the open position. The Reactor Coolant System (RCS) pressure was reduced from 2255 psig to 875 psig in approximately twenty-one (21) minutes. At the beginning of this event, steam was being bypassed to the condenser and the reactor thermal power was at 263 MW, or 9.5%. Electricity was not being generated. The following systems malfunctioned during the transient:

a. Steam and Feedwater Rupture Control System (SFRCS).

b. Pressurizer Pilot Actuated Relief Valve.

c. No. 2 Steam Generator Auxiliary Feed Pump Turbine Governor.

The event was initiated at 2134 hours, when a spurious "half-trip" occurred in the SFRCS, resulting in closure of the No. 2 Feedwater Startup Valve and loss of flow to No. 2 Steam Generator. Approximately one minute later, low level in the No. 2 Steam Generator caused a full SFRCS trip, closing the Main Steam Isolation Valves

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(MSIV). The loss of heat sink for the reactor caused the RCS temperature, pressure, and pressurizer level to rise.

The RCS pressure increased to the pilot actuated relief valve setpoint (2255 psig) and the valve cycled open and closed nine times in rapid succession, failing to close on the tenth opening. Meanwhile, the reactor operator observed the pressurizer level increase and manually tripped the reactor about one minute after MSIV closure (two minutes into the transient). At this point the RCS pressure was approximately 2000 psig and decreasing while the pressurizer level had reached its maximum initial rise of about 310 inches. The RCS pressure continued to decrease due to the open relief valve and upon reaching 1620 psig approximately three minutes into the transient, actuated Safety Features including high pressure (water) injection and containment isolation.

Approximately five minutes into the transient the rupture disc on the pressurizer quench tank, which was receiving the RCS blowdown, burst. Bursting of the rupture disc was aggravated by the actuation of containment isolation, which had isolated the quench tank cooling system, resulting in expedited pressurization of the quench tank.

The RCS continued to blow down through the open pressurizer power relief valve and the quench tank rupture disc opening until primary coolant saturation pressure was reached, about six minutes into the transient. The formation of steam in the RCS caused an insurge of water into the pressurizer. This insurge and the high pressure water injection then restored pressurizer level to about 310 inches after nine minutes into the transient.

Approximately thirteen minutes into the transient, the secondary side of the No. 2 Steam Generator went dry. About fourteen minutes into the transient, the operators noticed the low level condition and found that the auxiliary feed pump was operating at reduced speed. Manual control of the auxiliary feed pump was started and water level restored to the No. 2 Steam Generator.

At approximately 21 minutes into the transient, the operators discovered that the pressurizer power relief valve was stuck open. Blowdown via this valve was stopped by closing the block valve, thus terminating the reactor vessel depressurization. The RCS pressure recovered to normal and cooldown of the system followed.

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The reason for the spurious "half-trip" of the SFRCS has not yet been determined. An extensive investigation revealed several loose connections at terminal boards, but nothing conclusive.

Investigation into the failure of the pressurizer pilot actuated relief valve revealed that a "close" relay was missing from the control circuit. This missing relay would normally provide a "seal-in" circuit which would hold the valve open until the pressure dropped to 2205 psig. Without the relay the power relief valve cycled open and closed each time the pressure of the RCS went above or below 2255 psig. The rapid cycling of the valve caused a failure of the pilot valve stem, and this failure caused the power relief valve to remain open.

It was determined that the auxiliary feed pump did not go to full speed because of "binding" in the turbine governor.

The transient was analyzed by the NSSS vendor and determined to be within the design parameters analyzed for a rapid depressurization.

With exception of the above noted malfunctions, the plant functioned as designed and there was no threat to the health and safety of the general public.[2-3]

2. Feedwater Isolation Valves

On two occasions in July, at the Trojan nuclear plant, a hydraulic feedwater isolation valve failed to close upon receipt of a close signal. All other equipment required to operate, functioned normally.

The first failure, July 6, 1977, had been attributed to an improperly assembled solenoid in the hydraulic actuator. Investigation of the second failure indicated that both events were due to a lack of sufficient hydraulic pressure.

Failure of the valve to close was caused by the pressure regulator leaking and failing to close down to regulate the pressure. This caused the hydraulic system on the valve to be drained down to a point that the valve would not operate. Inspection of the regulator revealed that a locking screw on the regulator adjusting knob was loose and would allow the knob to vibrate to any position. With the regulator improperly set it would not close down to regulate pressure and would allow the hydraulic fluid to drain before the hydraulic operator could function. A similar problem was discovered on two other valves, although the maladjustment was not sufficient to prevent these valves from operating.

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