



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

TIO

MAY 28 1980

Docket No. 50-295, 50-304, 50-456  
50-457, 50-454 and 50-455

Commonwealth Edison Company  
ATTN: Mr. Cordell Reed  
Vice President  
Post Office Box 767  
Chicago, IL 60690

Gentlemen:

The enclosed Circular No. 80-13 is forwarded to you for information.  
If there are any questions related to your understanding of the suggested  
actions, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

*James G. Keppler*  
James G. Keppler  
Director

Enclosure: IE Circular  
No. 80-13

cc w/encl:

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

May 28, 1980

IE Circular No. 80-13

GRID STRAP DAMAGE IN WESTINGHOUSE FUEL ASSEMBLIES

Description of Circumstances:

During the refueling operation at Salem Unit 1, it was noted by the licensee that some of the assemblies that were removed had suffered grid strap mechanical damage. This was reported to the NRC in LER 79-44. Subsequent to this discovery all fuel assemblies were removed from the core for examination. The degree of the damage to the grid straps was classified in three categories: small pieces missing (15 assemblies), grid material ripped and laid over (5 assemblies), larger sections missing and fuel pins exposed (11 assemblies). No damage to the fuel pins was observed. A total of 31 assemblies suffered some grid damage.

The damage appeared to be the result of corner to corner interaction of the grid straps of diagonally adjacent fuel assemblies during the vertical loading and unloading movements. No correlation of the damage to core location, grid strap elevation, or manufacturing and shipping batches has been identified.

The licensee and the fuel manufacturer established the following guidelines for reloading damaged assemblies: (1) those assemblies with full width pieces missing will not be reloaded for cycle 2, (2) those assemblies with deformed edges and those with small pieces missing will be reloaded with special procedures to prevent further damage.

Salem Unit 1 is fueled with 17X17 Westinghouse assemblies. Similar grid problems have occurred at other facilities fueled with 14X14 and 15X15 Westinghouse assemblies; however, fewer assemblies were damaged in those instances.

Recommended Actions:

All licensees using 14X14, 15X15, or 17X17 Westinghouse assemblies are advised to:

- (1) Visually inspect grid straps of those fuel assemblies which are discharged from the core as well as the spent fuel pool for control rods returned to the core.

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