



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

MAY 7 1980

DOCKET NO.: 70-820

APPLICANT: United Nuclear Corporation  
(UNC Recovery Systems Division)

FACILITY: Fuels Recovery Plant  
Wood River Junction, Rhode Island

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF AMENDMENT APPLICATION DATED MAY 21, 1979, AS  
SUPPLEMENTED JULY 6 AND 17, 1979, AND MARCH 24 AND APRIL 22,  
1980, FOR CHANGE IN ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES, 07000820A04S

Background

The subject application concerns a change in the administrative procedures relevant to nuclear criticality safety at the Wood River Junction site as a consequence of the resignation of the Manager, Nuclear and Industrial Safety (NIS). The NIS manager, prior to May 18, 1979, was a qualified criticality safety specialist but the man assigned to replace him was not. The new manager also lacks the bachelor's degree called for in Section 200 of the license, although he has extensive safety experience and is qualified as a health physics specialist. To compensate for the lack of an on-site specialist in nuclear criticality safety, United Nuclear arranged to use consultants from their Naval Products plant at Montville, Connecticut, who have made periodic visits to the site to confirm that the criticality safety requirements are being met. In a proposed amendment to Section 200 of the license, United Nuclear committed to periodic site visits by a safety specialist and the amended section applies broadly to safety specialists. United Nuclear also provided resumes for two of the specialists. In response to the application, the NRC agreed to the assignment of the new NIS manager and his functioning as a qualified radiation safety specialist but requested further clarification of the proposed amendment, in a letter to UNC dated January 16, 1980. The requested clarification was provided by the subsequent letters from United Nuclear.

The proposed amendment was discussed in telecons on April 17 and 30, 1980, with Mr. William Kinney, IE Region I principal inspector for the site. It was agreed that the proposed amendment as modified March 24, 1980, and License Condition 28 would be acceptable if the word "normally" were deleted from the commitment for periodic visits by a qualified safety specialist. The deletion was made in the application of April 22.

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Discussion

As evident from the background information, the proposed amendment is concerned solely with maintenance of safety following a change in personnel. The operations at the Wood River Junction plant are routine and the proposed amendment does not alter the review requirements for changes. The primary concerns are thus maintenance of discipline in performing operations and the detection of subtle changes of potential significance to criticality safety. The biweekly one-day visits by qualified specialists should be sufficient for maintenance of discipline and detection of possible significant changes unrecognized by onsite staff.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The proposed revision of the administrative requirements to provide for biweekly visits by a qualified specialist, and the presence onsite of an experienced NIS manager, should be sufficient to maintain criticality safety.

Approval of the revised amendment application is recommended, but United Nuclear should not be allowed to use offsite safety specialists to the point where no full-time qualified safety officer is required onsite.

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