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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 1000
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76012

April 2, 1980

In Reply Refer To:
RIV
Docket Nos. 50-445/IE Information Notice No. 80-13
50-446/IE Information Notice No. 80-13

Texas Utilities Generating Company
ATTN: Mr. R. J. Gary, Executive Vice
President and General Manager
2001 Bryan Tower
Dallas, Texas 75201

Gentlemen:

This IE 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; however, an IE Circular or Bulletin will be issued to recommend or request specific licensee actions, if required. If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact the director of the appropriate NRC regional office.

Sincerely,

Karl V. Seyfrit
Director

Enclosures:
1. IE Information Notice
No. 80-13
2. List of IE Information
Notices Recently Issued

SSINS No.: 6870
Accession No.:
8002280650

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

IE Information Notice No. 80-13
Date: April 2, 1980

GENERAL ELECTRIC TYPE SBM CONTROL SWITCHES DEFECTIVE CAM FOLLOWERS

Description of Circumstances:

This IE Information Notice alerts licensees and holders of construction permits of a potential defect in the cam followers of General Electric (GE) Type SBM control switches. Based on preliminary information, it appears that the defect is limited to switches manufactured prior to 1976 with cam followers of polycarbonate material, such as Lexan. In brief, the problem is initiated by exposing such polycarbonate material to hydrocarbons. Such exposure leads to severe cracking having a rock salt appearance which ultimately could progress to mechanical failure. It has been determined that such exposure has occurred during fabrication and could occur while performing maintenance (e.g., cleaning the contacts).

On February 22 and March 10, 1980, we were informed that SBM switches with defective cam followers had been found at Diablo Canyon Unit 1 and at the Cooper Station, respectively. Although the information was preliminary and sketchy, the problem is a long-standing one for which GE has issued "Service Information Letters" to its BWR customers. The problems associated with such switches, however, are not restricted to GE customers as evidenced by the Diablo Canyon case. Furthermore, these switches have a broad range of application. For example, the defective switches at the Cooper Station were used principally as hand control switches, most of which were located in the control room. In contrast, those at Diablo Canyon Unit 1 were used as auxiliary contacts on the 4KV and 12KV "Magna Blast" circuit breakers, with three SBM switches used per breaker: (1) a breaker mounted auxiliary switch, (2) a cell mounted auxiliary switch, and (3) a cell interlock switch.

This information is provided as notification of a possibly significant matter that is still under review by the NRC staff. 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 you have questions regarding this matter, please contact the Director of the appropriate NRC Regional Office.

LISTING OF RECENTLY ISSUED IE INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date Issued	Issued To
80-08	The States Company Sliding Link Electrical Terminal	3/7/80	All power reactor facilities with an Operating License (OL) or a Construction Permit
80-09	Possible Occupational Health Hazard Associated With Closed Cooling Systems For Operating Power Plants	3/7/80	All holders of power reactor Operating Licenses (OLs) and near term Construction Permits (CPs)
80-10	Partial Loss of Non-Nuclear Instrument System Power Supply During Operation	3/7/80	All Power reactor facilities holding Operating Licenses (OLs) and Construction Permits (CPs)
80-11	General Problems with ASCO Valves in Nuclear Application Including Fire Protection Systems	3/14/80	All holders of Reactor Operating License (OL), Construction Permit (CP), fuel fabrication and processing facilities
80-12	Instrument Failure Causes Opening of PORV and Block Valve	3/31/80	All holders of Power Reactor Operating Licenses (OLs) and Construction Permits (CPs)

Enclosure