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POOR ORIGINAL

May 4, 1979

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Region 1  
631 Park Avenue  
King of Prussia, Pa 19406

Attn: Mr. Boyce H. Grier, Director

Subj: Reply to Notice of Violation - Inspection 50-54/79-01.

Ref: Docket No. 50-54, License R-81.

Gentlemen:

This letter is in response to your April 10, 1979 report on Inspection 50-54/79-01 and the related Notice of Violation. Our response also discusses IE Bulletins 78-07 and 08 and Circular 77-14 and our management control systems for dealing with such matters, since these issues were also noted in the inspection report.

A. Reactor Operator Left Controls

Our policy has generally been expressed in terms of a licensed operator being required in attendance at the controls whenever the reactor is operating. A portion of the control room is out of direct line of sight of the controls by three or four paces. There is no need for an operator to spend a significant amount of time in the obscured area. An operator can respond to an audible alarm from that area in the same relative length of time as if he were writing in the reactor log book. For these reasons, distinction between the controls being attended and being in full view of the controls was not emphasized. Nevertheless, the practice has been for operators to remain in full view of the controls. With the lack of a

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definitive interpretation of the words "at the controls", and in his haste to produce a document for the NRC inspector, the operator on duty entered the obscured area of the control room in the case cited. After being informed of the NRC interpretation of "at the controls", a temporary memo adopting that interpretation into operating procedures was issued later that same day. Two days later a formal notice was circulated. We believe this corrective action will prevent further occurrences.

B. SRO Not Present For Scram Recovery

In the situation referenced a valving error caused reactor pool water level to drop below the low pool level reactor scram setpoint. The Senior Reactor Operator on call determined that his presence was not required for startup based on the September 3, 1965 exemption which reads as follows:

"The presence of a senior operator at the facility shall not be required during recovery...in instances which result from...false signals, which, in the opinion of the Senior Operator, were properly verified to be false and to have resulted from...personnel inadvertence... provided that prior to the initiation of such a recovery, the Senior Operator shall be notified...and shall determine that the shutdown was caused by one of the enumerated occurrences, and shall determine that his presence at the facility during recovery is not required."

After the scram occurred, the Senior Operator was properly notified. The cause of the scram was well understood by the Senior Operator on call as well as the Reactor Operators on shift. In the judgement of the Senior Operator, this event was within the intent of the exemption regarding false signals due to personnel inadvertence, a term originating from our exemption request which used the words, "Accidental or inadvertent manipulations of controls or equipment in a manner that does not affect the safety of the reactor". We recognize that the letter of the law leaves room for a technicality in the interpretation. However, we believe the presence or absence of the Senior Operator would have been irrelevant to the safety of the reactor in the case cited. If the Senior Operator had determined his presence to be required, the words of the regulations and the exemption clearly require it. On this basis we conclude that no violation had occurred.

C. NSC Review of Operations

This item of non-compliance states that the Nuclear Safeguards Committee has not reviewed facility operation for calendar years 1978 and 1979. The committee review function is performed by reviewing the audit report of a member of the committee who conducts the audit. A survey of recent audits reveals the following:

<u>Audit Period</u>	<u>Audit Report Sent To NSC Members</u>	<u>Review of Audit Documented in NSC Minutes</u>
Sept. 76 thru Feb. 77	3/25/77	Meeting 81 (7/7/77)
Mar. 77 thru Aug. 77	9/29/77	Meeting 83 (10/5/77)
Sept. 77 thru Mar. 78	5/15/78	Not Documented
Apr. 78 thru Aug. 78	9/29/78	Not Documented
Sept. 78 thru Mar. 79	4/24/79	Next Scheduled Meeting

Documentation clearly shows that audits were performed and submitted to all NSC members in a timely manner. The committee review of 1977 reports is documented. Members recall discussing the 1978 reports but this fact can not be established from the meeting minutes. There has not been a meeting of the NSC since the 1979 report was distributed. At the next regular meeting the three outstanding audit reports (5/15/78, 9/29/78, & 4/24/79) will be brought up for review and documented. The NSC is establishing an audit committee with the responsibility for scheduling, reviewing follow-up action and documenting audits of facility operations as well as all other required audits. We believe this improvement will reduce the probability for failure to document the NSC review of audits.

D. IE Bulletin 78-07 Respirators

When the NRC inspector was on site, this bulletin could not be found, even though numerous individuals were familiar with the contents. Since the inspection, the original copy has been found with documentation indicating that it was reviewed by our Manager of Health, Safety and Environmental Affairs. He determined that it was not applicable since our respiratory protection program does not include the use of supplied-air hoods or air-line supplied air respirators operated in the demand mode. Since the bulletin was not applicable, no response was required.

E. IE Bulletin 78-08 Fuel Transfer Tube

This bulletin, likewise, could not be produced during the inspection but has since been located. A transfer canal at our facility connects the reactor pool and the hot cells; shielding of the canal is equivalent to that of the reactor pool. Responses to the bulletin were only required "where plant design incorporates a fuel element transfer tube". No response was considered necessary since the canal is not a transfer tube and because a review of our facility showed that no parts of our facility were subject to the problem discussed in the bulletin.

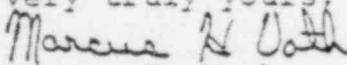
F. IE Circular 77-14, Separation of Water Systems

This Circular could not be located during the inspection. While staff members recalled its contents, they could not recall what type of facility review was done, if any. Since personnel have left and been re-assigned in the year and a half period since the circular was published, and because there was no documentation showing that a review had been completed, we have initiated a complete review of all water supply lines. Completion of the facility review and any appropriate modifications are expected within one month.

G. Management Control Systems

We believe the primary cause for the inspector's concern of our management control systems that permitted situations to occur was our handling of the IE Bulletins and Circulars. In other respects we take exception to the suggestion that management control is inadequate. Both responsive action to NRC concerns and documentation of the responses have been addressed.

A new file has been created entitled "NRC-IE Bulletins and Circulars". In that file, we will include the NRC transmittals and the Carbide response to Bulletins and Circulars. The file will also include documentation concerning the review and corrective action taken. The Manager of Nuclear Operations, a position created and staffed last August, is assigned the responsibility of performing or arranging for the necessary review, corrective action and communication with the NRC on an appropriate schedule. We believe that centralizing the information and the overall responsibility will result in improvement in this area.

Very truly yours,  
  
Marcus H. Voth  
Manager  
Nuclear Operations