



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
REGION I  
631 PARK AVENUE  
KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19406

Docket No. 50-423

JAN 27 1981

Northeast Nuclear Energy Company  
ATTN: Mr W. G. Council  
Senior Vice President - Nuclear  
Engineering and Operations  
P. O. Box 270  
Hartford, Connecticut 06101

Gentlemen:

The enclosed IE Bulletin No. 81-01, "Surveillance of Mechanical Snubbers," is forwarded to you for information. No written response is required.

If you desire additional information regarding this matter, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

Boyce H. Grier  
Director

Enclosures:

1. IE Bulletin No. 81-01
2. List of Recently Issued Bulletins

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cc w/encls:

- J. F. Opeka, System Superintendent Nuclear Operations
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UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

IE Bulletin No. 81-01  
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SURVEILLANCE OF MECHANICAL SNUBBERS

Description of Circumstances:

Several instances of failures of mechanical snubbers supplied by International Nuclear Safeguards Corporation (INC) have been identified that indicate possible deficiencies in these snubbers. A summary of the failures that have occurred is provided below:

1. On August 9, 1974, the Tennessee Valley Authority submitted event report BFAO-50-260/741W identifying 11 of 14 INC Model MSVA-1A snubbers that were found inoperable on Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Station Unit 2 and subsequently identified 5 of 14 inoperable units on Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Unit No 3. All of these units were found to be frozen, and the cause was attributed to a failure to lubricate the parts during assembly. The failed snubbers were replaced with new units produced by the same manufacturer.
2. On April 12, 1976, the St. Lucie Plant Unit 1 facility of Florida Power and Light Company submitted event report No. 50-335-76-9 wherein five INC Model MSVA-1 snubbers were identified as inoperable because they were found to be frozen. The failures were caused by oxidation on the internals and by improper assembly. All INC mechanical snubbers were replaced with units produced by another manufacturer.
3. On April 8, 1977, Iowa Electric Light and Power Company submitted event report No. 77-23 for the Duane Arnold Energy Center facility that identified 13 INC Model 1MSVA-1 Type AS snubbers to be frozen; the cause of failure was attributed to large amounts of interior oxidation. The units were replaced with those produced by another manufacturer.
4. On December 5, 1979, personnel from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission visited Department of Energy (DOE) facilities at Richland, Washington, to obtain information on DOE experience with INC snubbers at the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF). The DOE-owned 4,000 mechanical pipe restraints (snubbers) at the FFTF examined more than 800 of these

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