



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
611 RYAN PLAZA DRIVE, SUITE 1000
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011

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March 2, 1981

Docket Nos. 50-498
50-499

Houston Lighting & Power Company
ATTN: Mr. G. W. Oprea, Jr.
Executive Vice President
Post Office Box 1700
Houston, Texas 77001

Gentlemen:

The enclosed IE Circular is forwarded for your information. No written response to this circular is required. If you have any questions related to this matter, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

John T. Collum
Karl V. Seyfrit
Director

Enclosures:

1. IE Circular No. 81-03
2. List of Recently Issued
IE Circulars

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

January 27, 1981

IE Bulletin No. 81-01: 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 Corporation 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 FFTF was equipped with more than 4,000 mechanical pipe restraints (snubbers) supplied by INC. In 1978, FFTF examined more than 800 from their installation and were frozen. The plant was seen no service and had been in environments for 1 to 2 years.

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Attachment:
Recently issued IE bulletins