



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

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

SUPPORTING AMENDMENT NO. 57 TO LICENSE NO. DPR-36

MAINE YANKEE ATOMIC POWER COMPANY

MAINE YANKEE ATOMIC POWER STATION

DOCKET NO. 50-309

Introduction:

By teletype dated May 22, 1981, Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company requested an emergency change to the Technical Specification appended to Facility Operating License No. DPR-36 for the Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station. The proposed change involves:

Revising Technical Specification 3.17.B.7.b to allow the operation of the reactor building purge system to by-pass the charcoal absorbers during the cycle 6 refueling operation only under the following conditions:

1. During the time the Low Pressure Safety Injection (LPSI) system check valves are being installed or completion of refueling operation, whichever is earlier.
2. During the charcoal absorber by-pass mode the containment purge valves will be trippable manually and automatically.

Discussion and Evaluation

Technical Specification 3.17.B.7.b requires the reactor building purge to be filtered through the high efficiency particulate air filters and charcoal absorbers whenever irradiated fuel is being handled or any object is being handled over irradiated fuel in the reactor building. This requirement precludes by-passing the filters during operations that could possibly poison the charcoal absorbers, such as welding in the containment building during refueling.

In compliance with a confirmatory order dated April 20, 1981, Maine Yankee Atomic Power Station is cutting and welding, into the Low Pressure Safety Injection (LPSI) system piping in order to install new check valves. Exhausting the emissions from this cutting and welding operation could "poison" the charcoal absorbers and make them inoperable.

In order to preserve the charcoal absorbers the licensee proposes, on a one-time only basis, to by-pass the charcoal absorbers during the welding and cutting operation. During the period the absorbers are by-passed the containment purge valves shall be trippable automatically and manually in order to provide the capability to limit the release of radioactivity if required.

In our review of the licensee request we have considered the fact that a decay time of greater than 210 hours has occurred prior to the current fuel handling operations inside containment. In previous reviews we have determined for Maine Yankee that exposures associated with the fuel handling accident inside containment will be at levels well below 10 CFR 100 guidelines without the use of charcoal absorbers if the fuel has experienced decay times greater than 210 hours. This coupled with the ability to close the purge valves automatically or manually and the one-time only feature provides adequate assurance that the requested exception will not constitute a significant hazard to the health and safety of the public. Accordingly we find that the proposed modification to technical specification 3.17.8.7.b is acceptable and therefore it is approved.

#### Environmental Consideration

We have determined that the amendment does not authorize a change in effluent types or total amounts nor an increase in power level and will not result in any significant environmental impact. Having made this determination, we have further concluded that the amendment involves an action which is insignificant from the standpoint of environmental impact and, pursuant to 10 CFR §51.5(d)(4), that an environmental impact statement or negative declaration and environmental impact appraisal need not be prepared in connection with the issuance of this amendment.

#### Conclusion

We have concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that: (1) because the amendment does not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of accidents previously considered and does not involve a significant decrease in a safety margin, the amendment does not involve a significant hazards consideration, (2) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, and (3) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations and the issuance of this amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Date: June 12, 1981