

SYNOPSIS OF ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH NUREG 0612

The following information is provided to identify exceptions or interpretations related to verbatim compliance with NUREG 0612 Guidelines that have occurred during the course of this review. For each of the major Guidelines specific exceptions are identified, a discussion concerning the underlying objective of that Guideline is provided, and approaches felt to be consistent and inconsistent with that guideline are identified. While each such exception has been handled on a case by case basis, and has been considered in light of overall compliance with NUREG 0612 at a particular plant, the topics are of a nature general enough to be of interest to other plants.

GUIDELINE 1 SAFE LOAD PATHS

Exception 1

In the opinion of the licensee, development of individual load paths is impractical since there are a significant number of loads for which the pickup and laydown areas vary from outage to outage. Further, in some cases the location of safety related equipment combined with the design of the floor over which heavy loads are carried indicates that for a number of lifts there is no preferred load path.

Discussion

The purpose of this portion of Guideline 1 is to ensure that the paths over which heavy loads are carried have been developed and approved in advance of the lift and are based on considerations of safety. In particular it is provided to avoid the ad hoc selection of load paths by maintenance personnel since such a situation could result in the use of a load path which has been established by a process wherein considerations other than safety have taken precedence.

It is recognized that there are a class of loads which, although in excess of the weight specified for classification as a heavy load, are actually miscellaneous or maintenance related loads for which it is impractical to identify a specific laydown area which can be fixed from outage to outage. Conversely there are a number of loads for which specific laydown areas have been allocated in the original plant design and which should reasonably be expected to be carried over the same load paths during every outage. A tabulation of loads in this latter category, generally applicable to PWR's and BWR's, was provided in NUREG 0612 as Table 3-1.

A fundamental principal of NUREG 0612 is protection through defense in depth. Specifically, the first line of protection from an accident which could result in damage to spent fuel or equipment required for safe shutdown or decay heat removal is to avoid or minimize the exposure of such equipment to crane borne loads overhead. Where such exposure is minimized, rather than avoided, a second line of defense can then be provided by intervening barriers such as floors or the provision of additional lifting device redundancy or safety factors. Considering the foregoing, the use of exclusion areas, rather than safe load paths, is consistent with this guideline only under circumstances where there is no safety related equipment located beneath the area accessible to the crane hook but outside of the exclusion area. This situation has been found in buildings such as the turbine hall or screen house where safety related equipment is concentrated in a specific area within the crane path. It is unlikely to occur within containment due to the numerous safety related piping and electrical systems provided to support decay heat removal.

Approaches Consistent With This Guideline

Specific safe load paths are prepared and approved for major components for which hazardous areas are well established. For miscellaneous lifts load corridors are established such that any movement within that corridor cannot result in carrying a heavy load over spent fuel or systems required for safe shutdown or decay heat removal (regardless of intervening floors). Movement within these corridors is at the discretion of the load handling party.

Specific safe load paths are prepared and approved for major components for which hazardous areas are well established. For miscellaneous lifts detailed directions are prepared and approved for developing safe load paths which include floor plans showing the location of safety related equipment and instructions to avoid such equipment. Specific safe load paths are then prepared each time a miscellaneous lift qualifying as a heavy load is made. These individual load paths are temporary and may change from outage to outage.

Approaches Inconsistent With this Guideline.

Use of limited exclusion areas in containment which merely prohibited the carrying of heavy loads directly over the core or specific components and allow full load handling party discretion in other areas.

Exception 2

In the opinion of the licensee marking of load paths on the floor is impractical. This may be caused by the general use of temporary floor coverings which would cover the load path markings, or, due to the number of loads involved, a requirement for multiple markings which could confuse the crane operator.

Discussion

The purpose of this feature of Guideline 1 is to provide visual aids to assist the operator and supervisor in ensuring that designated safe load paths are actually followed. In the case of the operator it has the additional function of avoiding undesirable distractions while handling suspended loads (e.g., trying to read procedural steps or drawings while controlling the crane). This feature should also be seen as a provision necessary to complete a plan for the implementation of safe load paths. Specifically it provides some additional assurance that, having spent the time and effort to develop safe load paths, those paths will be followed.

Approaches Consistent With this Guideline

Rather than mark load paths a second member of the load handling party (that is, other than the crane operator) is made responsible for assuring that the designated safe load path is followed. This second person, a signalman is typically used on cab operated cranes, checks out the safe load path prior to the lift to ensure that it is clear, refers to the safe load path guidance during the lift and provides direction to the operator and that the load path is followed. To support this approach the duties and responsibilities of each member of the load handling party should be clearly defined.

Prior to a lift the appropriate load path is temporarily marked (rope, pylons, etc.) to provide a visual reference for the crane operator. In cases where the load path cannot be marked (e.g., transfer of the upper internals in a PWR) temporary or permanent match marks can be employed to assist in positioning the bridge and/or trolley during the lift.

In either case reasonable engineering judgement would indicate that in certain specific lifts marking of safe load paths is unnecessary due to physical constraints on the load handling operation (e.g., simple hoists, monorails, or very short lifts where movement is limited to one coordinate axis in addition to the vertical).

Approaches Inconsistent With this Guideline

Positions which in effect do not recognize the need for realistically providing visual aids to the crane operator and imply that, for all lifts, the operator will remember the load path from review of procedures or by reference to a drawing.

Exception 3

Obtaining written alternative procedures approved by the plant safety review committee for any deviations from a safe load path is considered too cumbersome to accommodate the handling of maintenance loads where laydown areas may have to change or load paths altered as a result of unanticipated maintenance requirements.

Discussion

The purpose of this portion of this guideline is to ensure that deviations from established safe load paths receive a level of review appropriate to their safety significance. In general it is highly desirable that once safe load paths are established they are retained and kept clear of interference rather than routinely deviated from. It is recognized, however, that issues associated with plant safety are the responsibility of an individual licensee plant safety review committee (or equivalent) and the details of their exercising this responsibility should be within their jurisdiction.

Approach Consistent With this Guideline

A plant safety review committee (or equivalent) delegates the responsibility for approving temporary changes to safe load paths to a person, who may or may not be a member of that committee, with appropriate training and education in the area of plant safety. Such changes are reviewed by the safety review committee in the normal course of events. Any permanent alteration to a safe load path is approved by the plant safety review committee.

Approach Inconsistent With this Guideline

Activities which in effect allow decisions as to deviations from safe load paths to be made by persons not specifically designated by the plant safety review committee.

GUIDELINE 2 LOAD HANDLING PROCEDURES

No significant exceptions to this guideline have been encountered. Occasionally a question arises concerning the need for individual procedures for each lift. In general, it was not the purpose of this guideline to require separate procedures for each lift. A reasonable approach is to provide separate procedures for each major lift (e.g., RV head, core internals, fuel cask) and use a general procedure for handling other heavy loads as long as load specific details (e.g., load paths, equipment requirements) are provided in an attachments or enclosures.

GUIDELINE 3 CRANE OPERATOR TRAINING

Exception

The only exception occasionally encountered with respect to this Guideline other than fairly minor, site unique, exceptions has been a desire to deviate from the requirement of ANSI B30.2-3.1.7.0 for testing of all controls before beginning a new shift. In some cases a licensee has qualified a commitment in this area by noting that only crane controls "necessary for crane operation" will be tested at the start of a shift.

Discussion

This requirement (ie. not a recommendation) of ANSI B30.2 is important since crane control system failures are relatively significant contributors to load handling incidents. The only reason that can be seen for an exception in this area is a general aversion to the word "all". Specifically, it appears that some licensees fear that a commitment to this requirement will force them to test all control type devices (eg. motor overloads, load cells, emergency brakes) rather than just those features generally known as controls (ie. hoist, bridge, and trolley motion controllers).

Approaches Consistent With this Guideline

Exceptions that clearly indicate that all normal controls (hoist, bridge, and trolley motion controllers) will be tested at the start of each shift and that the purpose of not committing to "all" controls is to avoid a misunderstanding concerning other control devices.

Approaches Inconsistent With This Guideline

A response that implies that a decision to test or not test a normal control will be made by the crane operator on the basis of what type of lift or direction of motion he expects for the forthcoming shift.

GUIDELINE 4 SPECIAL LIFTING DEVICES

Exception 1

Some licensees have indicated that their special lifting devices were designed and procured prior to the publication of ANSI N14.6 and therefore are not designed in accordance with that standard. This fact is sometimes combined with a reference to the title of that standard to reach a conclusion that the standard is not applicable.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to ensure that special lifting devices were designed and constructed under controlled conditions and that sufficient documentation is available to establish existing design stress margins and support future maintenance and repair requirements. ANSI N14.6 is an existing standard that provides requirements supporting this goal for lifting device applications where the consequence of a failure could be similar to that which could be expected in the event of the failure of a special lifting device carrying a load within the jurisdiction of NUREG 0612. Consequently it seems appropriate that for special lifting devices subject to NUREG 0612 it should be able to be demonstrated that, from a design standpoint, they are as reliable as a device for which ANSI N14.6 was developed.

Approaches Consistent With This Guideline

Although not originally specified to be designed in accordance with ANSI N14.6 the special lifting device in question was provided by a reactor vendor, in accordance with appropriate quality assurance and quality control procedures, for a specific application associated with power plant components provided by that vendor. Based on either the review of the original stress report or, if such a stress report is unavailable, the preparation of a new stress report, the licensee has determined that margins to material yield and ultimate strength are comparable to those specified in ANSI N14.6. Although not required of the lifting device vendor, the licensee has reviewed the design of the lifting device and prepared a list of critical components whose repair or replacement should be performed under controlled conditions.

Approaches Inconsistent With This Guideline

No information is available concerning the original design but it is probably allright because the device has been used for ten years and never failed.

The device was built before the publication of ANSI N14.6, does not carry shipping containers of nuclear material weighing more than 10,000 pounds, and thus need not comply with ANSI N14.6.

Exception 2

No 150% overload test has been performed and, in the opinion of the licensee, such a test is impractical.

Discussion

The performance of a load test in excess of the load subject to NUREG 0612 is an important contributor to the ability to assess the overall reliability of a device. Such a test supplements design reliability by demonstrating that the device was properly fabricated or assembled and that a portion of the design safety margin has been demonstrated. Such proof of workmanship is particularly important for a fairly complicated device. It is recognized, however, that the specification of a 150% overload test is somewhat arbitrary and that, in some cases, the nature of the device is such that the likelihood of workmanship shortcomings is remote.

Approaches Consistent With This Guideline

The licensee has evaluated the lifting device in question and has determined that design stress margins are substantial. Further it has been established that the device itself is uncomplicated and principally put together with mechanical joints such that an assembly error is highly unlikely. The use of welded joints is severely limited and where employed were performed in accordance with substantial quality controls (eg AWS D1.1) including NDE. The device has been tested to 100% of rated load.

Although a 150% overload test has not been performed the lifting device has been subjected to a manufacturer recommended overload to demonstrate proof of workmanship (typically 120-125%).

Approaches Inconsistent With This Guideline

See this topic for Exception 1 above.

Exception 3

The requirement of ANSI N14.6 for an annual 150% load test or full NLE is excessive. Both the load test (due to the inability to make the test lift within containment) and the NDE (due to the need to remove protective coatings) are impractical and not justified by the infrequent use of these devices.

Discussion

A continuing inspection program to assure the continued maintenance of safety margins incorporated in the original design of the device is important to demonstrate the reliability of special lifting devices. It is recognized, however, that some devices employed in a nuclear power plant, particularly those associated with refueling, are used under conditions of control and at frequencies of use that are substantially less severe than that possible for the type of lifting device for which ANSI N14.6 was originally prepared. Consequently a reasonable relaxation of the inspection interval seems appropriate.

Approaches Consistent With This Guideline

Overload tests will be conducted but at a longer interval, 5 years, between tests to be consistent with the number of operational lifts required.

NDE of load bearing welds will be conducted at 5 year intervals or, alternatively, load bearing welds will be examined through a program that ensures that all welds will be examined over a normal inservice inspection interval of 10 years in a manner similar to that specified in the B&PV Code for Class 2 Component Supports.

Approach Inconsistent With This Guideline

Continuing inspection will be limited to an annual visual examination of the device.

GUIDELINE 5 LIFTING DEVICES NOT SPECIALLY DESIGNED

Exception

Licensees have taken exception to the requirement to select slings in accordance with the maximum working load tables of ANSI B30.9 considering the sum of static and dynamic loads. Most commonly it is the licensees position that the approximate factor of safety of five on rope breaking strength inherent in these tables adequately accomodates dynamic loading.

Discussion

The intent of this portion of this Guideline, which also applies to special lifting devices under Guideline 4, is to reserve the ANSI B30.9 safety factors for accomodating sling wear and unanticipated overloads and avoid a reduction of this safety factor as a result of the routine dynamic loads inherent in hook/load acceleration and deceleration. While it is acknowledged that, for operating characteristics typical of cranes employed at nuclear power plants, these dynamic loads are unlikely to be substantial, such a determination cannot be made generically. Typically the actual dynamic load due to hook/load acceleration or deceleration is a function of design hook speeds and the type of hoist control system employed. It should also be recalled that ANSI B30.9 is a general industrial standard which applies to all load handling devices and does not in itself provide for any additional conservatism in consideration of the potential consequences of a load handling accident at a nuclear power plant. Based on this, it is considered reasonable that individual licensees evaluate the potential contribution of dynamic loading in their operations and if such dynamic loading is indeed significant accomodate it in their procedures for sling selection.

Approach Consistent With This Guideline

The licensee has evaluated the potential routine dynamic loading for lifting devices not specially designed and found them to be a relatively small fraction (typically 5-15%) of static load. This estimate has been made on the basis of either calculated acceleration and deceleration rates or through use of the industrial standard for impact loading of cranes specified in CMAA-70. In either case having verified that routine dynamic loading of a specific hoist is indeed small the licensee has drawn the conclusion that revised selection criteria to accomodate such minor additional loads will not have a substantial effect on overall load handling reliability.

Approach Inconsistent With This Guideline

Statement to the effect that dynamic loads are accomodated in the tables of ANSI B30.9 with no indication that the licensee has assessed the actual dynamic loading imposed on cranes subject to NUREG 0612.

GUIDELINE 6 CRANE INSPECTION TESTING AND MAINTENANCE.

Exception

The only exception occasionally encountered with respect to this Guideline other than fairly minor and site-unique exceptions has been a desire to deviate from the requirement of ANSI B30.2-1.1.2.a.2 and 3.2.4 for testing of hoist limit devices before beginning a new shift. In some cases a licensee has qualified a commitment in this area by noting that this limit switch will be tested only if operations in the vicinity of the limit switch are anticipated.

Discussion

While this issue is treated somewhat ambiguously in ANSI B30.2 (it is a recommendation in article 1.1.2 and a requirement in article 3.2.4) it is important since two-blocking incidents are relatively significant contributors to load handling incidents. Further it should be noted that this test has been incorporated as a requirement of OSHA in 29 CFR 1910.179.(n).(4).(i). It is recognized, however, that there may be circumstances where such a test is not prudent. First, such a test clearly should not be made with the hook under load. Consequently if a shift change is made with the hook loaded (this, by the way, is not a desirable practice and could be precluded through strict compliance with ANSI B30.2-3.2.3.j) a hoist limit switch test should not be performed. Second, there may be circumstances where the nature of forthcoming load handling operations indicates that the time (and minor risk) associated with this test is not justified. In particular if it is known that a hoist will not be used or used only in an area substantially removed from the upper travel limit, it would seem reasonable to defer the limit switch test until the start of the next shift. If such an approach is taken, however, it should be approached with care. Requirements for deferring an upper limit switch test should accommodate the uncertainty associated with maintenance plans and establish unambiguous criteria concerning what operations can be determined to be remote from upper travel limits. Such criteria should recognize that the need for upper travel limit switch protection may be preceded by a control system failure and consequently should conservatively allow for operator response time and potential delays associated with emergency shutdown of the crane.

Approach Consistent With This Guideline

General compliance with this requirement. Certain specific provisions made for deferring upper limit switch testing under conditions that are not subject to operator interpretation.

Approaches Inconsistent With This Guideline

An approach that implies that a decision to test or not is left to the discretion of the operator or implies that such a test will be required only if operations are planned in close proximity to the hook upper travel limit.

GUIDELINE 7 CRANE DESIGN

Exception

Occasionally a licensee has indicated that the overhead electric travelling cranes employed at a site were purchased prior to the publication of CMAA-70 or ANSI B30.2-1976 and thus these standards should not be applied.

Discussion

The purpose of this Guideline is to ensure that all cranes carrying heavy loads in nuclear power plants meet certain minimum criteria in their design and, consequently, can be assumed to provide an acceptable standard of mechanical, electrical, and structural reliability. It is also recognized, however, that cranes in operating plants may have been designed and procured prior to the publication of current standards and, thus, not strictly comply with some details of these standards. In general, though, current standards have evolved from predecessor standards in existence at the time of crane procurement (EOCI 61, ANSI B30.2-1967) and, since the later standards are not revolutionary, it is likely that cranes at nuclear power plants will provide a degree of reliability equivalent to that provided by the current standards. Such a general determination cannot be made, however, by the staff since nuclear power plant cranes are usually unique and provided with site specific design features. It is up to the licensee then to make a systematic comparison of their crane design with the requirements of current standards and determine if additional design features are appropriate.

Approach Consistent With This Guideline

The licensee has compared original crane procurement specifications or existing crane designs with the requirements of the referenced standards in areas effecting load handling reliability. In instances where the current standard provides additional protection against the consequences of operator error or component failure the licensee has proposed modifications which will result in a degree of load handling reliability similar to that provided in the current standard.

Approach Inconsistent With This Guideline

Positions to the effect that the cranes satisfied standards in existence at the time of procurement and what was good enough then is good enough now.