

February 25, 1975

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

SECY-75-60

POLICY SESSION ITEM

For: The Commissioners

Thru: Acting Executive Director for Operations *JWL*

Subject: FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE AND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON
ABNORMAL OCCURRENCES

Purpose: To approve publication of a Federal Register notice and release of
a public announcement pertaining to interim implementation of
section 208 of the Energy Reorganization Act, relating to reporting
to Congress and widespread dissemination of information on
abnormal occurrences.

Category: This paper covers a routine matter requiring Commission approval.

Discussion: At Policy Session 75-7 on February 20, 1975, the Commission con-
sidered SECY-75-7, which contained as an enclosure a notice of
proposed rule making which would have amended the Commission's
regulations to reflect sections 206 and 208 of the Energy Reorganiza-
tion Act of 1974. The Commission instructed the staff to delete that
portion of the notice relating to section 208, which pertains to
reporting of abnormal occurrences, and prepare a Federal Register
notice and a public announcement indicating that the Commission
had under consideration the amendment of its regulations to imple-
ment section 208 and that as an interim measure, information on
events presently reported as "abnormal occurrences" would be
placed in the Public Document Room and, by a computer printout,
in the local public document rooms. The Federal Register notice
and public announcement are enclosed.

Recommendation: The Commission

- (a) Approve publication in the Federal Register the notice in
Enclosure "A".
- (b) Approve release of the public announcement in Enclosure "B".
- (c) Note, that the JCAE and the Senate and House Government
Operations Committees will be informed.

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Coordination:

The Office of the Executive Legal Director concurs in the recommendation of this paper. The Office of Public Affairs prepared the public announcement.

Scheduling:

Consideration at an early policy session.

Donald F. Knuth

Donald F. Knuth, Director
Office of Inspection and Enforcement

Enclosures:

As Stated

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Reporting of and Dissemination of Information Pertaining to
Abnormal Occurrences at Nuclear Facilities

Section 208 of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-438) provides as follows:

ABNORMAL OCCURRENCE REPORTS

* Section 208 The Commission shall submit to the Congress each quarter a report listing for that period any abnormal occurrences at or associated with any facility which is licensed or otherwise regulated pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, or pursuant to this Act. For the purposes of this section an abnormal occurrence is an unscheduled incident or event which the Commission determines is significant from the standpoint of public health or safety. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall limit the authority of a court to review the determination of the Commission. Each such report shall contain--

- (1) the date and place of each occurrence;
- (2) the nature and probable consequence of each occurrence;
- (3) the cause or causes of each; and
- (4) any action taken to prevent reoccurrence;

the Commission shall also provide as wide dissemination to the public of the information specified in clauses (1) and (2) of this section as reasonably possible within fifteen days of its receiving information of

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each abnormal occurrence and shall provide as wide dissemination to the public as reasonably possible of the information specified in clauses (3) and (4) as soon as such information becomes available to it."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has under active consideration the formulation of proposed amendments to its regulations to facilitate implementation of the requirements of section 208. An appropriate notice of proposed rule making will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER for public comment before any amendments are adopted.

As an interim measure, the Commission will provide widespread dissemination to the public and make quarterly reports to the Congress as required by section 208 of all events which are reported to the Commission by facility licensees in conformity with the technical specifications of licenses and NRC regulations. These licensee reports cover many events for a variety of purposes. Several categories of reported events come within the new statutory standard while others do not. Those to be reported cover

events ranging from relatively insignificant matters which are of interest to the Commission in that they provide a data base to assist the Commission in evaluating trends in safety-related equipment or personnel performance in licensed facilities, to events that are potentially significant or significant from the standpoint of public health and safety.

As at present, these reports from licensees will be placed in the Public Document Room at 1717 H Street, Washington, D.C., and in the local public document room nearest the facility at which the occurrence has taken place.

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In addition, every two weeks, a computer printout will be sent to the Commission's 122 local public document rooms containing information on reports by facility licensees for the preceding 15 day period. The reports and computer printouts will contain information on the date and place of each occurrence and the nature of probable consequences. Information on the cause of each occurrence and on any action taken to prevent a reoccurrence will be provided as soon as it is received by the Commission. Additional summary information will be included in a quarterly report to Congress.

In addition, the Commission will continue to issue public announcements on such events as nonroutine releases of significant quantities of radioactive material; significant radiation exposures to employees or members of the public; major enforcement actions; nonscheduled shutdowns of nuclear plants which are expected to last for more than one week, regardless of cause; and shutdowns resulting from failure of or damage to safety related equipment.

(Sec. 208, Pub. L. 93-438, 88 Stat. 1248 (42 U.S.C. 5848)).

Dated at _____ this _____ day of _____, 1975.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

John C. Hoyle
Acting Secretary of the Commission

NRC MAKES WIDE DISSEMINATION OF REPORTS
BY NUCLEAR FACILITY LICENSEES

Information on all events at nuclear facilities which are required to be reported by licensees is being made available to the public in 122 locations across the nation, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said today. This wide dissemination of information on such occurrences is part of the NRC's implementation of provisions of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974.

The Act requires the NRC to provide as wide dissemination as reasonably possible of certain information on "abnormal occurrences." The law defines an "abnormal occurrence" as "an unscheduled incident or event which the Commission determines is significant from the standpoint of public health and safety."

NRC Regulations require licensee reporting of many events for a variety of purposes. Several categories of reports come within the new statutory standard while others do not. Those to be reported cover a variety of events ranging, for example, from the failure of an operator to make appropriate log entries to quality assurance problems and equipment malfunctions. As a matter of past practice, all have been called "abnormal occurrences."

Enclosure B

More than half (888) of the "abnormal occurrences" reported in 1974 were of little significance in terms of safe operation of the nuclear power plants, and none of the more than 1400 events had any impact on public health and safety. NRC now is reviewing the categories of required licensee reports to determine, in the context of the statutory definition, the changes which should be made in the present reporting and dissemination system. The public will be given opportunity to comment on any proposed changes.

The NRC routinely places reports from licensees in its Public Document Room in Washington, D.C., and in the local public document room which contains files on the nearby facility. In addition, NRC issues public announcements on such events as nonroutine release of significant quantities of radioactive material; significant radiation exposures to employees or members of the public; major enforcement actions; nonscheduled shutdowns of nuclear plants which are expected to last for more than one week, regardless of cause; and shutdowns resulting from failure of or damage to safety related equipment.

In the interim -- pending action on the proposed changes -- NRC plans to supplement its distribution activities by sending to 122 local public document rooms every two weeks, a computer printout of occurrence reports by all facility licensees for the preceding 15-day period.

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