



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

October 5, 1990

Docket No. 99901114/90-01

Mr. Charles R. Kistner, President  
Buffalo Pumps  
An Ampco-Pittsburgh Company  
874 Oliver Street  
North Tonawanda, New York 14120-3298

Dear Mr. Kistner:

This letter addresses the inspection of your facility at North Tonawanda, New York, conducted by Messrs. R. L. Cilimberg and L. L. Campbell of this office on July 30-August 3, 1990, and the discussions of their findings with you at the conclusion of the inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to follow-up an allegation that Buffalo Pumps (BP) was "waterglassing" pumps that were supplied to the nuclear industry between 1984 and 1986. Areas examined during the NRC inspection and our findings are discussed in the enclosed report. This inspection consisted of an examination of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, and observations by the inspectors.

During this inspection BP representatives stated that BP had not accepted purchase orders (POs) which impose special nuclear requirements (Section III of the ASME Code, Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 50, and 10 CFR Part 21) since 1983 when BP ceased to be an ASME N-Type certificate holder. However, BP continued to supply commercial-grade pumps and parts to nuclear utilities. The allegation was substantiated by BP personnel who stated that it was common practice to impregnate (waterglass) pump casings and casing covers with sodium silicate when the casings leaked during hydrostatic testing. This practice was limited to commercial-grade and Navy pumps and some parts which were supplied directly to nuclear utilities. A review of 422 shop orders and related POs, selected by the NRC inspectors, issued during 1984, 1985, and 1986, determined that pumps and parts were ordered commercial-grade only and nuclear requirements were not imposed. Discussions with BP personnel and a review of documents indicate that ASME Section III nuclear pumps were not waterglassed because it was prohibited by procedures, controls, and the Authorized Nuclear Inspector (ANI).

There is a concern that nuclear utilities are using commercial-grade pumps which may have been waterglassed in applications where the use of impregnated pumps would not be permitted by design. Corrective action cannot be taken by the utilities unless they are advised by BP that the commercial-grade pump casings and covers may have been waterglassed. Based on the discussions with you and your staff during the inspection and subsequent to the inspection, we understand that BP is notifying their customers that commercial-grade pumps may have been waterglassed to prevent leakage during hydrostatic testing. Please provide us with a copy of any correspondence which BP transmits to their customers informing them of the potential for commercial-grade pumps being waterglassed.

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Mr. Charles R. Kistner

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You advised the NRC inspectors that considerable corrective action by BP resulted from other government agency inspections and reviews of waterglassing of Navy pumps and that BP has not waterglassed any pump casings since 1987.

In accordance with 10 CFR Part 2.790 of the Commission's regulations, a copy of this letter and the enclosed inspection report will be placed in the NRC's Public Document Room.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, we will be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

[Original signed by]

E. William Brach, Chief  
Vendor Inspection Branch  
Division of Reactor Inspection  
and Safeguards  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:  
Inspection Report No. 99901114/90-01

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~~Docket 99901114~~

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