



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION II
101 MARIETTA ST., N.W., SUITE 3100
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30363

JUN 03 1982

INVESTIGATION REPORT NO. 50-438/82-08

SUBJECT: Tennessee Valley Authority
Bellefonte nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1
Improper Piping Installation Practices

DATES OF INVESTIGATION: March 16-18, 1982

INVESTIGATOR:

S.A. Vorse, Regional Investigator
Enforcement and Investigations Staff

05-21-82

Date Signed

REVIEWED BY:

Carl E. Alderson, Director
Enforcement and Investigations Staff

5-21-82

Date Signed

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

BELLEFONTE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

MARCH 16-18, 1982

A. INTRODUCTION

In late February 1982, the Resident Inspector, Bellefonte Nuclear Power Plant, was informed by a person who desired to remain anonymous, that there was talk in the Mechanical Engineering Unit (MEU) Quality Control Department that it was suspected that several completed welds had been reheated to correct pipe misalignment. This was apparently done on welds which had already been signed off as acceptable. While reheating of welds for pipe alignment is permissible, it can be done only when detailed procedures are provided. However, in this incident, which allegedly occurred in September 1981, a witness observed the welds being reheated for pipe alignment without proper procedures being prepared. Several days after he was initially informed, the Resident Inspector questioned those who were allegedly involved or at least physically in a position to know about the incident. On March 9, 1982, a welder voluntarily told the Resident Inspector that he had reheated the welds to align the pipe but that no other persons were present or cognizant. On the following day, the welder's Foreman approached the Resident Inspector and told him that he (the Foreman) had instructed the welder to reheat the welds.

B. SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

Based on the information provided by the Resident Inspector about the reheating of welds on a safety related system it was decided that an investigation should be conducted under the authority of Section 161.c of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, to determine the facts and circumstances related to the reheating of the welds and to determine whether any willful or deliberate attempt to circumvent prescribed procedures by higher supervision had occurred.

During the course of the investigation, the Investigator held formal interviews with several licensee and licensee contractor employees and one former contractor employee who might have had knowledge of the incident and/or may have assisted in the reheating of welds to realign pipe.

C. FINDINGS

1. A welder did reheat three welds to correct pipe misalignment in violation of TVA procedures, but claimed he was not aware of the procedural requirements.
2. The welder, when confronted by his supervisors and later by the NRC Resident Inspector, denied that he had reheated the welds; however, the welder subsequently contacted the Resident Inspector and acknowledged that he had reheated the welds.

3. The welder's foreman had observed the welder reheating two of the welds without the welder's knowledge, but took no action. The foreman, when later confronted by his supervisor, denied any knowledge of such activity.
4. Following the welder's admission to the Resident Inspector, the foreman contacted the Resident Inspector and stated that he had directed the welder to reheat the welds. However, when interviewed by the Investigator the foreman recanted and stated he said this only to protect the welder because he (the foreman) had seen the welder reheat the welds and took no action; therefore, he felt responsible.
5. Reheating of the welds without following the approved procedure is a violation of NRC requirements. The Resident Inspector cited the licensee for this violation in Report No. 50-438/82-09.