



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

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION

SUPPORTING AMENDMENT NO. 30 TO

FACILITY LICENSE NO. R-38

GENERAL ATOMICS

DOCKET NO. 50-89

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By letter dated July 19, 1990, the licensee, General Atomics (GA), requested an amendment to Facility License No. R-38 for its TRIGA Mark I non-power reactor. The requested amendment would permit the licensee to substitute portable radiation detectors, and types other than solely ion chambers, for certain reactor room radiation monitors during calibration or maintenance of the permanent detectors. The reason for the request is to provide flexibility to use instruments other than just ion chambers when the normal radiation monitors are inoperable, so that there is less of a likelihood of interruption of reactor operation for inoperable radiation monitors.

2.0 EVALUATION

The current Technical Specifications require certain operable radiation monitors while the reactor is in operation. Currently, a portable ion chamber detector with alarm capability may be substituted temporarily for the permanent area radiation monitor or for the continuous air monitor. The licensee has requested that equivalent gamma-sensitive radiation monitors be substituted for the specification of only ion chambers. The amendment would increase flexibility in choosing substitute radiation monitors in the event the radiation monitor required maintenance during an extended irradiation. Such maintenance could provide additional assurance of correct and reliable operation of the radiation detectors. The amendment would require that portable equivalent detectors with alarms, or under visual observation, could be used temporarily.

The staff has determined that the use of portable detectors in this way would not significantly decrease the safety of operation, and the increased assurance or reliability of the permanent detectors might enhance overall facility safety. Furthermore, the staff recognized that (1) identical Technical Specifications as proposed are currently in the licensee's Mark F reactor (Docket No. 50-163) Technical Specifications and (2) use of the identical specifications in the Mark F reactor application has been generally acceptable. Therefore, the staff concludes that this change in the Technical Specifications would cause no significant decrease in safety.