



WORCESTER
POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE

Worcester
Massachusetts 01609
(617) 793-5000

Mr. Harold Bernard
Standardization and Special Projects Branch
Division of Licensing
U.S.N.R.C.
Washington, DC 20555

April 19, 1983

50-134

Dear Mr. Bernard:

This is to notify you of pending changes at the WPI Open Pool Reactor Facility associated with major renovations to Washburn Laboratory, where the Reactor is housed. With the exception of the Reactor Facility, all areas of Washburn are to be gutted and rebuilt in a complete remodeling of the building.

The only effect of the building modernization on the Reactor Facility proper will be a shortening of the Facility by some 14 feet to make way for a new stair well. A new, permanent interior wall of standard construction will be built inside the Reactor Facility on the basement and first floor levels. During this phase our current outer wall and security devices will remain in place and Facility personnel will continuously be present when construction workers are inside the Facility. When the new wall and doors are completely installed, the security devices will be moved inside the new wall and the Reactor Facility will be finished with its modifications.

The volume of the Facility will be reduced by about 15% by these changes, but the volume will still exceed 30,000 cubic feet, the value used in our Safety Analysis Report. The ventilating system will remain at the same capacity so no safety calculations are affected. Figures 3 and 4 of our FSAR will be revised when the construction is completed.

The WPI Technical Specifications, Section 4.2, specify that "two small areas, one each on the second and third floors of Washburn Laboratory, directly above the reactor control drives, shall become restricted areas whenever the Reactor is operating at power levels in excess of 1 kw." The maximum radiation levels in each of the 12' by 12' areas is about 5 mrem/hr at 10 kw. We presently limit access to these areas with locked doors and flashing lights, but these means will not be available during construction. We plan to limit power levels to 1 kw or less during working hours when construction workers are present in the building. The building is empty and locked internally and externally, except for the Reactor Facility portion, after working hours. Should a need arise for operation above 1 kw, we will operate on a limited basis, after hours, and provide the former exclusion areas with continuous surveillance by Reactor Facility employees, who can be stationed well outside, but in full view of, the areas in question. The WPI Radiation, Health and Safeguards Committee has approved this plan in principal and will be kept informed of its implementation.

If you would like any further information, please contact me.

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LCW/ns

cc: Dean Bolz
Prof. Zwiap
Prof. Mayer
Prof. Goloskie

Sincerely yours,

L. C. Wilbur

L. C. Wilbur, Professor of
Mechanical Engineering
and
Director, Nuclear Reactor Facility