



Commonwealth Edison

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June 14, 1984

Mr. Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Subject: LaSalle County Station Units 1 and 2
Appeal of Certain Fire Protection Positions
NRC Docket Nos. 50-373/374

- References (a): LaSalle County Station Unit 2 license NPF-18,
dated December 16, 1983.
- (b): NRC inspection report Nos. 50-373/83-44 and
50-374/83-38 dated December 12, 1983
- (c): Cordell Reed letter to H. R. Denton dated
January 27, 1984
- (d): Cordell Reed letter to James Keppler, Region III
dated February 15, 1984
- (e): A. Schwencer letter to D. Farrar dated March
22, 1984

Dear Mr. Denton:

References (a) and (b) promulgated certain NRC positions taken by the Offices of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and Inspection and Enforcement in the fire protection reviews of LaSalle County Station. In reference (c), Commonwealth Edison requested a meeting with the NRC staff to discuss our concerns with those positions. Reference (c) also noted that the NRC positions were being applied, in varying degrees, to other Commonwealth Edison Company facilities.

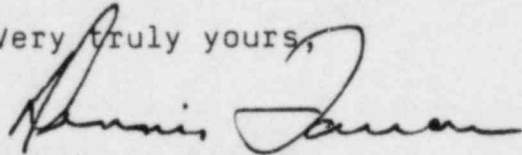
On March 28, 1984, we met with your staff to discuss these fire protection issues. As a result of that meeting, we believe it may be possible to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of our concerns without further meetings. The purpose of this letter is to provide a basis for reaching those resolutions.

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Attached to this letter are the resolutions which we believe are acceptable. If the attachments do not meet with your staff's approval, we request that an appeal meeting on the issues be held at the Division Directors level.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dennis L. Farrar".

Dennis L. Farrar
Director of Nuclear Licensing

Attachment

8472N

Attachment

Concern #1: The applicability of General Design
Criterion 1 to Fire Protection

In reference (d), Commonwealth Edison expressed concern over the use of General Design Criterion-1 as the basis for items of noncompliance in NRC Inspection Report Nos. 50-373/83-14 and 50-374/83-48.

The current redefinition of the regulatory term "important-to-safety" is likely to have pervasive consequences for licensing and regulation of Commonwealth Edison nuclear units. Given the extensive use of the term in NRC Regulations, and other documents, a sharp departure from the industry's long standing interpretation of the term "important-to-safety" would be a largely unexamined and inappropriate expansion of the scope of these documents. Additional regulation by the NRC as a result of this issue should proceed in an orderly manner with appropriate review as generic issues are identified.

We are participating in the effort to achieve a generic resolution of this issue. Upon resolution, we will implement whatever additional actions may be required, and we feel that the applicability of GDC-1 to fire protection systems and equipment need not be finally resolved at this time.

Concern #2: Imposition of All Aspects of All NFPA Codes

In Reference (c), Commonwealth Edison objected to the apparent NRC Staff position that GDC-1 makes all provisions of each of the 34 NFPA Codes referenced in NRC Fire Protection Guidance legally binding on Commonwealth Edison Company. It was our position that for those NFPA Codes which have not been expressly adopted by the NRC in its regulations, Commonwealth Edison Company compliance was only required where we had made a specific commitment. Further we believe that NFPA Codes allow for engineering judgement to be utilized in the application of the NFPA guidance.

The NRC staff maintained that because Commonwealth Edison had not identified significant deviations from the NFPA Codes, the SER as written committed us to meet all the provisions of each of these NFPA codes. In Reference (e), the NRC staff indicated their agreement that the NFPA Codes allow for engineering judgement, and that the appropriate resolution of differences in technical interpretations in the codes should be a matter for subsequent review and possible referral to NFPA committees.

To finally resolve this issue, we agree to work with your staff to specifically identify the NFPA codes that are applicable to our stations and any significant deviations of our program from these codes. We have begun a review of our LaSalle County, Byron, and Braidwood Stations to document the applicable NFPA codes and

any significant deviations of our programs. We expect that this review will be completed by December 31, 1984 for LaSalle and Byron and prior to receipt of an operating license at Braidwood. We propose also to review our Dresden, Quad Cities, and Zion nuclear stations following completion of their final 10 CFR 50 Appendix R reassessments to identify the applicable NFPA codes for these stations and any significant deviations. We expect to complete the review for these stations by March 1, 1985. Final resolution of any noted NFPA Code deviations will involve either justifying or correcting the deviation. All justifications will be based on Fire Protection engineering judgement and will be documented.

Concern #3: Imposition of Surveillance Tests in Excess of Those Currently Prescribed by Standard Technical Specifications

During the final review of LaSalle fire protection issues, the NRC staff required that surveillance testing be imposed on LaSalle County Station in excess of the requirements provided in the published NRC BWR Standard Technical Specifications. There were two specific examples of additional surveillance requirements being imposed.

The first involved an apparent misunderstanding between Commonwealth Edison and the NRC staff that periodic fire pump tests would have to be performed in accordance with NFPA-20/1983, section 11.3, at eighteen month intervals. We now understand that the NRC staff was referring to the initial acceptance test for the installation of these centrifugal fire pumps, which requires three points on the pump performance curve be demonstrated to assure that the pump is operating within its design performance rating. As committed in References (a) and (d), Commonwealth Edison has performed tests of both diesel fire pumps at LaSalle which met the requirements of sections 11-2.3, 11-2.4, and 11.2.5 of NFPA-20/1983. The testing of one of the diesel fire pumps was witnessed by a representative of the manufacturer of the pump as well as by our fire protection consultant (Schirmer Engineering). We understand that these tests resolve the concern of the NRR staff.

We also understand from Reference (e), that the NRR staff feels only one point on the performance curve need be demonstrated in the periodic tests of fire pumps. This one point test is considered adequate once the three point acceptance test has been performed. LaSalle Station will meet or exceed the Standardized Technical Specification requirements for periodic fire pump tests, and we believe on this basis that this issue is resolved.

Commonwealth Edison was also concerned that the imposed requirements for fire damper surveillances at LaSalle included periodic operability tests of accessible dampers. The original Unit 1 and Unit 2 technical specifications were the same as the NRC BWR Standard Technical Specifications which permitted a visual inspection of fire dampers to suffice for the periodic surveillance.

As a result of your staff's continuing concerns with the adequacy of the existing Standardized Tech Specs, and their assurance that they are seeking revisions to those Standardized Tech Specs through appropriate NRC review procedures, LaSalle Station commits to develop a periodic testing program on fire dampers. This program will include periodic operability tests of selected fire dampers. In the program which we are developing to meet this commitment, we will categorize fire dampers into several groups and specify the surveillance frequency of the dampers within each group depending upon their significance with respect to safe shutdown and safety-related equipment.

Concern 4: Imposition of NFPA-51B Training Requirements for Fire Watches

Commonwealth Edison expressed concern with the NRC staff position that actual experience extinguishing a test fire is necessary for fire watches supervising welding, cutting, grinding, or other hot work. The fire watches primary function is not to extinguish fires, but to detect and report them promptly. Only in the case of a small incipient fire should the fire watch attempt to extinguish it. Most cutting and welding related fires in generating stations are small Class A fires. An Ansul Corporation document which establishes the industry ratings for certain fire extinguishers states that "application and operator technique is not as important for Class A fires as for Class B fires." Thus actual experience extinguishing fires is of only minimal value to fire watches.

The NRC staff disagrees. NRC guidelines require that a fire watch for welding, cutting, grinding and open flame work must be trained and equipped to prevent and combat fires. The Staff apparently further assumes in their guidelines that the training is as delineated in NFPA-51B. In their opinion, a person who has not been trained to operate a fire extinguisher and has not had the actual experience of extinguishing a test fire is not an acceptable fire watch for activities of welding, cutting, grinding or other hot work.

In an attempt to resolve this item Commonwealth Edison will agree to implement a Corporate policy on the training of contractor fire watches which will include the following items:

- (a) The use of fire extinguishers.
- (b) Familiarity with the facilities and the locations of the fire alarms.

- (c) The duties of fire watches. This includes the need to remain in the area for thirty minutes after welding is complete and a search when possible of the other side of the walls or floors where sparks could fall through cracks or other openings in the floor or wall.
- (d) Hands-on fire extinguisher training and practice by extinguishing a small Class B fire.
- (e) Hands-on classroom familiarization in the procedure for operating the extinguishers including practice on discharged fire extinguishers.

This contractor fire watch training program will be implemented by December 31, 1984 for our operating stations and upon receipt of an operating license for stations now under construction.

Commonwealth Edison already trains appropriate Company personnel annually. This training includes the actual practice of extinguishing test fires. Also note that this commitment to provide hands-on practice in extinguishing test fires for fire watches for welding, cutting, grinding and open flame work is applicable only at our operating stations.

BTPAPCSB 9.5-1 Appendix A Section A.8 and No. 3.1.e.3 established that on multiple reactor sites where there are operating reactors and construction being completed, the fire protection program should include additional fire protection capability and administrative controls necessary to protect the operating unit from construction fire hazards.

To meet this objective when construction activities involve welding and/or cutting in areas containing significant fire loading, such as diesel oil storage tank rooms, this activity shall be performed to provisions which include the use of welding and cutting permits in accordance with NFPA-51G.

When construction activities involve welding and/or cutting in fire areas or zones within the security area a fire watch shall be in place except as specified below. In areas where only a minor fire might develop, a fire watch will man each area/elevation on each shift when such construction activities are being performed. This fire watch will remain cognizant of all welding or cutting activities within the specified area or elevation. Fire watches may not be provided for conditions less hazardous than those described in paragraph 3-3 of NFPA 51.B (1984).