



May 26, 2020  
20-041

Ms. Andrea Kock, Director  
Division of Fuel Management  
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards  
U.S Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington D.C. 20555-001

- Reference: (1) License No. SNM-42, Docket 70-27
- (2) Letter Dated March 23, 2020, BWXT (Burch) to NRC (Kock), Requests for Regulatory Relief from Nuclear Criticality Safety, Radiation Protection, Fire Protection, Material Control & Accounting and Emergency Preparedness Requirements in the SNM-42 License Application – COVID-19 Pandemic Response
- (3) TSG-DFM-2020-01, Dated April 21, 2020, Temporary Staff Guidance – Fuel Facility Requests for Regulatory Relief Related to COVID-19

Subject: Request for Regulatory Relief from Conducting Annual Evacuation Drill

Dear Ms. Kock:

BWXT Nuclear Operations Group-Lynchburg (NOG-L) requests relief from the requirement to perform an annual evacuation drill due to the inability to maintain social distancing in the evacuation assembly area. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends social distancing of individuals of at least 6 feet to help in preventing the spread of the virus. Chapter 8 of SNM-42 includes the Emergency Plan for the site. Paragraph 4.3 of the Emergency Plan specifies the requirement that an evacuation drill shall be conducted annually involving the entire complex. NOG-L's annual drill was last performed on June 27, 2019. SNM-42 Chapter 1, Section 1.11 defines annual as within 365 days with a maximum extension of 60 days (425 Days) which equates to August 25, 2020.

The NOG-L evacuation area is located on the west side of the protected area south of the EECF. The evacuation assembly area is approximately 275 feet long by 80 feet wide (22,000 square feet). This space will accommodate approximately 611 individuals when spaced 6 feet apart (36 square feet per person) as recommended by the CDC. Under the recommended social distancing the evacuation area is inadequate to safely conduct the evacuation drill without increasing the possibility of virus transmission. In addition, the CDC states that being in close and continuous contact for more than 10-minutes without social distancing increases the possibility of virus spread. Evacuation drills at NOG-L take more than 10-minutes to conduct. Therefore, NOG-L specifically requests an amendment to SNM-42 stating that an annual evacuation drill is not required in 2020. NOG-L requests regulatory relief from performing the evacuation drill until July 1, 2021. Approval of this amendment is needed by August 25, 2020. In

accordance with reference 3, the specific requirement, justification for this relief, and impact are stated in the subsequent paragraphs of this letter.

The Emergency Plan paragraph 4.3 states:

“An evacuation drill shall be conducted annually involving the entire complex, which includes all facilities contained within the main plant fence, Shipping and Receiving, Waste Treatment, Recycle, Security facilities, the LTC, and other facilities outside the NOG-L fence. Annual evacuation drills will be evaluated for adequacy of alarms and evacuation routes for all areas described above. An emergency organization drill and the annual evacuation drill may be held jointly to test the integrated response and personnel accounting capability of the emergency organization.”

NOG-L conducts evacuation training for employees every year in preparation for the annual evacuation drill. This training covers evacuation routes and exits to be used by personnel on the site in the event of an actual evacuation. Training is provided to all site employees, residents, vendors, and contractors with unescorted access to the site. The training is adequate to ensure personnel understand their responsibilities and evacuation routes during an emergency. In addition, the evacuation assembly area is immediately adjacent to the EECP exit portal used by all personnel on a daily basis. For these reasons, not performing an evacuation drill in 2020 will have little to no impact on personnel knowing how and where to evacuate.

NOG-L has a proven accountability system which relies on the leadership team being aware of when personnel are inside the protected area and reporting any personnel missing during an evacuation. NOG-L keeps records of the success of accountability during each evacuation drill. For the last 10-years of evacuation drills, the NOG-L leadership team had only two instances where 100% accountability was not achieved. In the first case, on 6/25/2015, one person was reported as not on site when they were where in fact on site. This case occurred, because the Front Line Manager (FLM) believed the employee was leaving before the drill occurred, but the employee was still on site when the drill took place. In the second case, on 6/28/2018, a holdout employee on second shift was not accounted for during the drill. Given the strength of this accountability system, NOG-L sees little or no impact to personnel accounting if an evacuation drill is not conducted in 2020.

As a compensatory measure for not conducting the annual evacuation drill in 2020, NOG-L will require all personnel with unescorted access to watch a short presentation showing the evacuation area and explaining their evacuation responsibility as part of the 2020 training.

In summary, NOG-L sees little or no impact to personnel's ability to evacuate safely, to the proper location, in a timely manner, and accomplish personal accountability by not performing an evacuation drill in 2020. The planned training provides a comparable level of safety to the evacuation drill given under the social distancing requirements in response to COVID-19.

There will be no impact to the public by not performing an evacuation drill in 2020, since the drill is only for site personnel. There will be no impact to the environment from not performing an evacuation drill in 2020. There will be no impact to the common defense or security by not performing an evacuation drill in 2020.

If you have any questions regarding the requests or require further information, please contact David Ward, Manager of Environment, Safety, Health and Safeguards, at (434) 522-5678.

Sincerely,



B. Joel Burch  
Vice President and General Manager  
BWXT Nuclear Operations Group, Inc. - Lynchburg

cc: NRC, James Downs, Senior Project Manager  
NRC, Region II  
NRC, Resident Inspector