

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20545

Letter For

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to ...

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Administrators
FROM: William J. Dircks
Executive Director for Operations
SUBJECT: BWR PIPE CRACK PROBLEMS

Jim
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with a check
have to be
resolved
Jan 4

Recently there has been an increasing number of problems involving degradation and cracking in thick-wall large-diameter stainless steel piping at BWR plants. As a result of the degradation identified in the recirculation system piping in the reactor coolant pressure boundary at Nine Mile Point Unit 1 the NRC issued IE Bulletin 82-03 entitled, "Stress Corrosion Cracking in Thick-Wall Large-Diameter Stainless Steel Recirculation Piping at BWR Plants." Inspection pursuant to this IE Bulletin has revealed instances of piping degradation at Monticello and Hatch Unit 1. Indications of piping degradation have also been identified at Hatch Unit 1 during inspections conducted pursuant to NUREG-0313, Revision 1 (Technical Report on Material Selection and Processing Guidelines for BWR Coolant Pressure Boundary Piping).

NRR has generic responsibilities in this area, has chaired the Pipe Crack Study Groups, and has the lead responsibility for resolution of Generic Task A-42 (Pipe Cracks in Boiling Water Reactors). Pursuant to that task, NRR published NUREG-0531 (Investigation and Evaluation of Stress-Corrosion Cracking in Piping of Light Water Reactors), several generic letters, and NUREG-0313. NUREG-0313, Revision 1, published in July 1980, sets forth the NRC staff's revised acceptable methods to reduce the intergranular stress corrosion cracking susceptibility of BWR ASME Code Class 1, 2, and 3 pressure boundary piping and safe ends, and provides inservice inspection requirements.

The NRC needs a central point for dealing with these technical issues. It is essential that the NRC response to the pipe crack problems be technically correct, regionally consistent, and integrated with ongoing studies and research. Accordingly, for any pipe crack problem that you judge requires substantive NRC review, I would like you to transfer responsibility for NRC action to NRR.

Because we have actions underway in this area, the following guidelines apply:

- 1. Licensee responses to IEB 82-03 will be reviewed by the appropriate Region and the results forwarded to IE. IE will evaluate and consolidate IEB 82-03 responses and provide the results to NRR. NRR will employ this information in formulating plans for NRC action.

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2. Substantial plant-specific problems identified during inspections pursuant to NUREG-0313 will be forwarded to NRR.
3. Substantial plant-specific problems with large-diameter safety related BWR piping will be forwarded to NRR.
4. NRR will evaluate and take appropriate licensing action regarding plant-specific repairs and modifications made as a result of pipe degradation identified pursuant to NUREG-0313 or IE Bulletin 82-03 inspections.

Transfer of responsibility to NRR shall be made by memorandum to the Director, Division of Licensing, NRR. The memorandum should transmit as much information about the problem as you initially have available.

You will, of course, retain cognizance over any potential enforcement actions that may be related to pipe degradation problems (e.g., failure to report, management control weaknesses, violation of tech specs, etc.):

(Signed) William J. Dircks

William J. Dircks
Executive Director for Operations

cc: H. R. Denton
R. C. DeYoung

DL *[initials]* 11/10/82
 DVassallo 11/10/82
 BEM *[initials]* 11/10/82
 BLiaw *[initials]* 11/10/82
 AD M&OE *[initials]* 11/10/82
 WJohnston 11/10/82

NRR
ECase
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TA-SA:DL RWessman:dn 11/10/82	IE B. Mills EJordan 11/12/82	AD SA:DL Giraglia 11/11/82	AD/OR:DL GLyras 11/11/82	D:DL DEsennet 11/11/82	NRR HDenton 11/ /82	EDO WDircks 11/ /82
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