

January 11, 1998

From: K. Jenison, Senior Resident Inspector, Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES), Division of Reactor Projects (DRP), Branch 4, Region I (RI)

To: C. Anderson, Chief, DRP, Branch 4  
D. Vito, Senior Allegation Coordinator

Subject: Diagnostic Plant Control Operator (PCO) Interest in a Radiological Waste Control Room Panel Test Computer Point

On January 9, I became aware of a PCO activity involved in a radiological waste control room panel test computer point. The operators took advantage of an opportunity to coordinate the testing of a particular panel with other existing plant conditions to diagnose whether or not a particular computer point would alarm. I became aware of the diagnostic activity through observation and a discussion between the resident inspector and a plant control operator (PCO). Each of the individual functions involved were certainly within the qualifications and training of the involved PCOs. I determined: what the specific alarms, test and computer point were; that for this specific instance that there was no initial safety significance; that a need to question the programmatic or long term significance of the issue with the Unit Supervisor (US) and shift supervisor (SS). My question was related to the level of knowledge that the US and SS should have of such opportunities taken to perform diagnostic activities.

The US and SS each stated that they were not aware of the specific activity, but had no specific concerns with this coordinated activity. The US and SS each stated that at a minimum they should have known about the coordinated diagnostic activities.

At approximately 1500, I spoke to Mr. Chambliss (Operations Superintendent) and stated that I was interested in the generic nature of the question and was convinced that there was no safety consequence in specific. He stated that he would pursue the issue generically, not specifically, and provide a PP&L perspective to the question.

At approximately 1645, I was phoned in my office by Mr. Markowski who requested to come to my office to talk about the issue. He stated that Mr. Kleinfelter had demanded to come with him (note: Mr. Kleinfelter was one of the PCOs involved in the coordinated diagnostic activity). Over the course of several hours the three of us discussed the issue. We came to the following conclusions:

1. I was not concerned from a safety perspective about the specific activity.
2. I was interested in the PP&L perspective related to the command, control, and knowledge level of the US and SS. Mr. Markowski committed to return

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- and discuss this issue.
3. I had requested no actions from the licensee concerning the specific issue and was operating under the assumption that the licensee was pursuing the issue on a generic basis only.
  4. Neither Mr. Markowski nor Mr. Kleinfelter expressed a concern or allegation to me and there were no requests for me to followup on any particular activity.
  5. If there was a piece of data that a licensed operator needs to perform his/her function, there should be a company process to facilitate that need (ie condition report, work authorization, employee concern, etc) without having to resort to informal diagnostic activities.

At approximately 2100, I was called in my office, by Mr. Chambliss, who stated that he had changed his mind after hour 1500 discussion and had pursued the specific issue. I stated that I was aware that he had changed his mind, based on the interaction with Mr. Kleinfelter and Mr. Markowski.

At approximately 2115, I phoned Mr. Anderson and communicated this issue to him. We agreed that I should return over the weekend to observe operator activities to ensure ourselves that there were no outstanding problems. I observed operator activities on January 11, 1998 and observed no problems. It is my conclusion that there were no allegations or specific safety issues involved in this interaction. A copy of this memo was forwarded to Mr. Vito, by email. This issue is being forwarded to Mr. vito to include as background material for the SSES radwaste panel test issue RI-A-97- which was a "nonreferred" concern being reviewed by the PP&L corporate auditors.