

November 13, 1997

SECY 97-267

For: The Commissioners

From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of
the EDO

Subject: /s/
WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 7,
1997

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*No input this week.

James L. Blaha
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 7, 1997

Public Meeting Between NRC Staff and Westinghouse Owners' Group
on Motor-Operated Valve (MOV) Risk Ranking Approach

In response to General Letter 96-05, "Periodic Verification of Design-Basis Capability of Safety-Related Motor-Operated Valves," the Westinghouse Owners' Group (WOG) submitted Revision 0 to WOG Engineering Report V-EC-1658, "Risk Ranking Approach for Motor-Operated Valves in Response to Generic Letter 96-05," dated June 2, 1997 for NRC staff review. The WOG prepared Engineering Report V-EC-1658 to provide assistance to individual licensees in ranking MOVs according to their risk significance in support of the development of GL 96-05 programs. The WOG also intends that licensees will be able to apply the MOV risk ranking approach in implementing an industry-wide Joint Owners Group (JOG) Program on MOV Periodic Verification for which a staff safety evaluation has just been issued. In the JOG program, test intervals for MOVs will be established based on the MOV's risk significance and functional margin.

On October 30, 1997, the NRC staff held a public meeting with WOG representatives to discuss WOG Engineering Report V-EC-1658. Meeting participants included NRC staff from the NRR Probabilistic Safety Assessment Branch, Mechanical Engineering Branch, and Generic Issues and Environmental Branch. During the meeting, the WOG representatives discussed specific aspects of the engineering report in detail. In response to NRC staff comments, the WOG representatives agreed to revise the engineering report to resolve those comments. The NRC staff is preparing minutes of the public meeting. The WOG representatives stated that submittal of a revised engineering report is anticipated for early December 1997. The NRC staff plans to complete its review of the WOG engineering report and to prepare a safety evaluation on the results of the staff review by early 1998. It is expected that the NRC staff will conclude that, with certain conditions and limitations, the WOG program provides an acceptable method for risk ranking MOVs for Westinghouse-designed plants. It is noted that NRC staff previously accepted, with certain conditions and limitations, a method developed by the Boiling Water Reactor (BWR) Owners Group to risk rank MOVs in BWR plants as described in a safety evaluation dated February 27, 1996.

NRC-NEI/EPRI Meeting on Containment Inspection Rule

Regulation 10 CFR 50.55a, "Codes and Standards," was amended in August 1996 to incorporate the requirements for inspection of containments. The amended regulation endorses the 1992 Edition

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with the 1992 Addenda of Subsections IWE/IWL of Section XI of the ASME B & PV code which prescribes the requirements for inspection of containments. The rule became effective on September 9, 1996, and it requires the licensees to complete the first period inspection of the containments before September 9, 2001. NEI requested the meeting to discuss the issues related to the implementation of the rule.

The meeting was held at NRC on October 23, 1997. NEI defined the purpose of the meeting as informing the NRC about industry activities; perceived hardships in implementing the rule; and EPRI (as consultant to NEI) activities in advising the licensees in streamlining the procedures for containment inspection, containment leak tight integrity (Appendix J of 10 CFR Part 50), and the maintenance rule (10 CFR 50.65). NEI/EPRI identified certain Code required inspection activities that might be of questionable value for the purpose of containment inspection. For example, lighting needs for concrete (VT-3) examination, retorquing of bolts for containment hatches, and different procedures for qualifying NDE personnel (for Class 1, 2, and 3 components and containments). Such Code requirements have been revised in the later Edition and Addenda of the Code. EPRI discussed their ideas on alternatives to the Code requirements where the industry is experiencing hardship in implementing them. The merits of the alternatives, in generic terms, were discussed during the meeting. Such alternatives may be submitted by the licensees as relief requests. The staff will review the requests on a plant specific basis. The proposed revision to 10 CFR 50.55a should resolve several of the issues identified by NEI/EPRI.

Meeting with EPRI Human Performance Technology Subcommittee

On November 6, 1997, representatives of the Human Factors Assessment Branch, NRR, and the Control, Instrumentation, and Human Factors Branch, RES, met with the EPRI Human Performance Technology (HPT) Subcommittee including representatives from eleven nuclear utilities and observers from INPO and NEI for an informal information exchange on current issues and activities in the area of human performance. The subcommittee meets annually to revise the EPRI HPT Research and Development program. The meeting agenda included an overview of EPRI human performance efforts and an overview of the NRC Human Performance and Reliability Implementation Plan and human performance research and regulatory activities.

Seminars on Risk-Informed Regulation Continue

During the week ending November 1, 1997, two additional mandatory seminars on risk-informed regulations were conducted. On October 28, 1997, the Director, Division of Safety and Analysis, and

acting Branch Chief of NRR's PRA branch presented the seminar to approximately 100 NRR staff members. This seminar was videotaped to allow viewing by staff members who were not able to attend the planned seminars. On October 29, 1997, a seminar was also presented the seminar at a Region I counterpart meeting. The purpose of these mandatory seminars is to motivate and familiarize the staff on the uses of risk-informed regulatory initiatives. The seminars provided attendees with a brief background on the PRA policy statement and associated PRA implementation plan, the scope of risk-informed regulation, and staff expectations and responsibilities. At both seminars, an overview of objectives and expectations for the use of PRA insights in inspection activities was provided. Many good questions were raised on the Commission's risk-informed regulation process.

Fire Protection Rulemaking

On November 5, 1997, members of the Plant Systems Branch met with representatives of the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) and of the Electric Power Research Institute as well as members of the public. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results of an industry survey conducted by NEI regarding a proposed fire protection rulemaking effort and to obtain comments from the meeting participants. An NEI representative stated that 1) according to the survey results, the industry is not in favor of a new rule; 2) the industry plans, however, to participate extensively in the rulemaking effort if the Commission directs the staff to proceed; 3) NEI recently created a task force to assist the staff in the effort; and 4) NEI will provide the staff with a written summary of the survey results before the end of the year. At the close of the meeting, the staff and NEI agreed to hold regular meetings to resolve issues related to the rulemaking effort as appropriate.

Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit 3

Jet Pump Riser Weld Cracking

On October 18, 1997, during visual inspections of reactor vessel internals, PECO Energy personnel found weld cracking in three jet pump riser welds. PECO Energy attributed the cracking to intergranular stress-corrosion cracking and to fatigue. PECO Energy prepared a 10 CFR 50.59 analysis on the cracking and forwarded a copy of the analysis to the NRC at our request. Staff review is ongoing. The analysis supported PECO Energy operating with the cracking at about 80% reactor coolant recirculation drive flow for a period of up to 8 months. This corresponds to about 90% reactor power. PECO Energy started up Unit 3 from its refueling outage on November 2, 1997. Unit 3 is currently at 90% reactor power.

Zion, Units 1 and 2

Resumption of the Operational Readiness Demonstration

The purpose of the licensee's Operational Readiness Demonstration is to show that Zion Station is ready to restart and operate Unit 2 safely in all respects. This means proper personnel performance, updated procedures, and operable plant equipment. The demonstration was started in July 1997 and then stopped because too many procedures had not been revised and too much plant equipment was out of service to demonstrate proper personnel performance. The demonstration is scheduled to recommence on November 10, 1997. The licensee has since decided to move forward with the operating crew simulator evaluations during the weeks of November 10 and November 17, 1997. The crew simulator evaluations are intended to show that the issues that developed during the Unit 1 shutdown in February 1997, i.e., reactivity management, interface between the qualified nuclear engineer and the operators, and management oversight have been properly resolved for the purpose of restarting and operating Unit 2. Personnel from Region III will observe at least two of the five crews during the operating crew simulator evaluations.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 7, 1997

Nebraska Issues Draft Low-Level Waste Disposal Facility Licensing Documents

On October 29, 1997, the Nebraska Low-Level Waste (LLW) Program, which consists of the State Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, announced the release of the State's technical evaluation of U.S. Ecology's license application for a LLW disposal facility proposed for Boyd County, Nebraska. The technical evaluation consists of two documents: a Draft Environmental Impact Analysis (DEIA) and a Draft Safety Evaluation Report (DSER). These documents constitute the technical basis for a future licensing decision--but do not represent a proposed licensing decision. Comments on these documents will be accepted until February 4, 1998, and the State has scheduled two public meetings during the comment period.

The State provided the NRC staff a copy of the Executive Summary of both reports. The DEIA analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed facility at the Boyd County site and four alternatives to this proposed action. The alternatives are two alternate disposal locations, assured storage, and no action. From the information provided in the Executive Summary, it is not clear whether any of the alternatives would be considered environmentally superior to the proposed action. The Executive Summary for the DSER identifies several unresolved deficiencies with the license application. The State has not requested NRC comments on the DEIA or the DSER, and because of resource limitations, the NRC staff does not plan to review them.

Field Trip and Discussion of Information on Yucca Mountain Site

On November 4, 1997, Department of Energy (DOE) and NRC geoscientists led a field trip starting in Beatty, Nevada, and ending near southern Yucca Mountain (YM). Twenty people attended including representatives from the State of Nevada and Nye and Clark Counties, Nevada. This public interaction was undertaken to observe and discuss evidence for a recently-proposed fault (Carrara Fault, trending from near Beatty low-level waste site toward Amargosa Valley near YM). Progress was made toward reaching agreement on the significance of the fault and its contribution to the YM seismic hazard and potential control of groundwater. Based on the discussions, NRC geoscientists consider the Carrara fault to be less of a seismic hazard than the nearby Bare Mountain fault but of potentially high significance to regional groundwater flow modeling.

During the discussions, the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses (Center) staff mentioned a study of anomalously high crustal strain rates in the area visited during the field trip. The Center staff indicated that the study results are currently undergoing detailed technical review and will likely be available in early 1998.

Workshop on the Revision of Part 35

On October 28-30, 1997, Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff conducted a public workshop in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to discuss the fundamental approaches and issues to be addressed in the revision of 10 CFR Part 35. Representatives of the Part 35 Working Group and Steering Group attended the meeting. Invited participants included nuclear medicine physicians; physician specialists, such as cardiologists, endocrinologists, and radiologists; medical and health physicists; technologists; nurses; radiopharmaceutical manufacturers; hospital administrators; and Agreement States. Topics discussed at the meeting included risk assessment; the NRC's 1979 Medical Policy Statement; and rule alternatives for the Quality Management Program, patient notification, threshold for reportable events, radiation safety committees, and training and experience criteria.

A second public workshop is scheduled for November 12-14, 1997, in Chicago, Illinois.

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Items of Interest
Week Ending November 7, 1997

International Workshop on Characterization and Measurement of Hydraulic Properties of Unsaturated Porous Media

A critical aspect of decommissioning reviews, involving sites where ground-water contamination is a possibility, is the estimation of ground-water flow and transport properties for use in dose assessment models. Presently, the NRC staff is evaluating the efficacy and practicality of various models addressing dose via the ground-water pathway. A condition common to most decommissioning sites is unsaturated porous media. Other Federal agencies (e.g., EPA, DOE, NASA, USGS, and DOD) are also addressing ground-water pollution problems.

To further this effort, the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research co-sponsored a technical workshop on this topic entitled "International Workshop on Characterization and Measurement of the Hydraulic Properties of Unsaturated Porous Media," along with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS)/USDA, University of California at Riverside, DOE, NASA, EPA, USGS, and U.S. Army Research Office. The workshop was held in Riverside, California, on October 22-24, 1997. The workshop brought together an international body of scientists (approximately 220 participants representing 25 countries) wrestling with the problem of how best to characterize, measure, or estimate the hydraulic properties of soils and rocks. The presenters discussed current measurement techniques, their field applications, and alternative theoretical and empirical methods for deducing hydraulic properties from measured data. NRC contractors and cooperators (i.e., PNNL, University of Arizona, and ARS) presented their research findings and developed technical leads for obtaining new information and data. A significant workshop item was the reporting on an unsaturated soil-hydraulic data base (UNSODA), developed jointly by the ARS and EPA, which contains detailed properties values for some 800 different soils in the U.S. Information from this national data base could be useful for decommissioning reviews using the PNNL infiltration evaluation methodology. Workshop proceedings will be published. Copies of the workshop program and abstracts are available from T. Nicholson, RES.

Workshop on Review of Dose Modeling Methods for Demonstration of Compliance with Radiological Criteria for License Termination

A critical aspect of decommissioning reviews involves the selection of dose models and input parameter values. The NRC staff is developing guidance for implementing the final rule on radiological criteria for license termination, which includes identification of criteria for evaluating acceptability of dose

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models and parameter values for demonstrating compliance with the final rule. In support of this effort, RES and NMSS staff members have cooperatively organized a public workshop on reviewing dose modeling methods. The workshop will be held in the NRC headquarters auditorium on November 13-14, 1997. The workshop presenters will include NMSS and RES staff discussing dose modeling needs for licensing reviews and development of guidance related to dose modeling and parameter selection needs; DOE national laboratory scientists discussing the various Federally sponsored dose models (i.e., D&D, RESRAD, and MEPAS codes); and EPA scientists discussing their dose assessment model (i.e., PRESTO code). A transcript of the meeting will be available in the Public Document Room. A NUREG/CP report of the workshop proceedings to support the development of the decommissioning guidance is being prepared.

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Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data
Items of Interest
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Technical Training Division

The Safety Aspects of Well Logging Course (H-314) was presented in Houston, Texas, on November 3-7, 1997. There were 23 attendees: 16 from Agreement States, 4 from Region IV, 1 from Region I, 1 from the Office of Research, and 1 from the Office of State Programs. The course provided an understanding of the principles of well logging in the gas and oil industry. In addition, NRC and Texas State regulations and inspection procedures, well logging equipment and operations, procedures related to retrieval of lost sources and irretrievable sources were also covered. Opportunities were provided for hands-on experience including a tour of a well site and demonstration of well logging equipment and procedures.

The PRA Training Focus Group (PTFG) met November 4, 1997, in headquarters. The PTFG is comprised of senior agency personnel from NRR, NMSS, RES, and AEOD and a regional representative. The PTFG was established to review the PRA training program and make recommendations on modifications to the program, specific courses, and specific course modules to ensure the training program remains consistent with the needs of the PRA Implementation Plan (PIP). PTFG meeting participants included senior TTD staff from NRR and AEOD/TTD. Discussion at this meeting centered on FY 1998 presentations of the PRA for Technical Managers Course, NRR-led seminars on risk-informed regulation, the PRA Technology and Regulatory Perspectives Course, additional PRA Basics for Inspection Courses requested by NRR, status of the Accident Progressional Analysis and Accident Consequence Analysis Courses, and modifications which were made to various PRA training courses to include information on draft regulatory guides and standard review plans.

Senior Management Meeting Trend Models

On November 6, 1997, AEOD distributed for internal NRC review the interim draft report on the Development and Findings of the Performance Trending Methodology. This draft report summarizes the work to date pertaining to the development of a performance trend methodology to be used in identifying candidate plants for discussion during the Senior Management Meeting (SMM). This report reviews the models considered and the analytical work performed to date in the creation of a trending model and a regression model that are being trial tested during the current screening meetings being held in preparation for the January 1998 SMM. This work is part of the Agency-wide effort to make the SMM

plant watch list decision process more understandable and transparent.

NUREG-1022, Reactor Event Reporting Guidelines

Revision 1 to NUREG-1022, Event Reporting Guidelines, 10 CFR 50.72 and 50.73, was provided to other offices for final review and concurrence and to the ACRS for review. After briefing the ACRS and CRGR and making any appropriate revisions, we plan to publish the report in final form in late December or early January. This revision is a first step in improving the guidance on event reporting. It will provide improved reporting guidance now based on experience using the current rules including two rounds of public comment on the proposed guidance. In the near future, we also plan to proceed with rulemaking to bring the event reporting rules into better alignment with the NRC's current needs including support of the move towards risk-informed regulation.

Site Visits to Palo Verde and Fermi

As part of its study on air-operated valves (AOV), representatives from AEOD and its contractor, INEEL, visited Palo Verde on October 28 and 29, 1997, and Fermi-2 on November 3 and 4, 1997. Members of RES and NRR participated in the meetings at Palo Verde and Fermi, respectively.

At both plants the AOVs are ranked or categorized by an expert panel using insights from the plants' probabilistic safety assessments (PSA) and from their maintenance rule evaluations of systems importance. Each plant's review found a large number of risk-important AOVs upon which the licensees are focussing attention to assure that they have adequate margins when they are required to function during design basis events.

Both utilities are performing calculations to determine available margins during design basis events. Palo Verde has had success performing dynamic testing with diagnostic equipment, whereas Fermi has not yet performed diagnostic testing.

Visits are currently planned for Palisades (November 18 and 19), LaSalle (December 15 and 16), and Millstone early in 1998.

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATIONS

1. PNO-I-97-068, Opu Nuclear Corp., (Three Miles Island 1), UNPLANNED SHUTDOWN DUE TO A HIGH PRESSURE INJECTION SYSTEM LEAK
2. PNO-I-97-069, Niagara Mohawk Power Corp., (Nine Miles Point 2), UNPLANNED SHUTDOWN GREATER THAN 72 HOURS

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3. PNO-III-97-088, Grant Riverside Methodist Hospital,
THERAPEUTIC MISADMINISTRATION
4. PNO-IV-97-064, General Atomics, FIRE IN HOT CELL UNDERGOING
DECOMMISSIONING
5. PNO-IV-97-065, X-Ray Inspection, Inc., LOST AND RECOVERED
RADIOGRAPHIC EXPOSURE DEVICE

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Office of Administration
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Contract Award

On November 5, 1997, the Division of Contracts and Property Management awarded a contract to the Pennsylvania State University for \$2,707,558. The contract is entitled "Rod Bundle Heat Transfer," and has a four-year period of performance. The following streamlining methods were used in the procurement process: Commerce Business Daily notice was waived because competition was limited to known sources; less than three source evaluation panel members were used; the statement of work was transmitted electronically; a deadline was set for the proposer's questions; the number of pages in the proposal was limited; and the inclusion of foldouts, sales brochures, videos, etc. in the proposal was prohibited.

Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
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NRC Management Development Conference Held

On November 3, 1997, the agency held a Management Development Conference for about 140 senior managers from Headquarters and the Regional Offices at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the conference was to present and discuss the management topics of critical importance to achieving the agency's management and organizational effectiveness goals and objectives. The Chairman and the Executive Director for Operations addressed the group. Other speakers included Steven Struthers from the Public Strategies Group, Christopher Mihm from the U.S. General Accounting Office, and Michael Halus from Resolution Dynamics.

Arrivals		
FETSKO, Margaret	SECRETARY (OA) (OPFT)	HR
KING, Mark	PROJECT ENGINEER (PFT)	RII
WONG, Albert	CHEMICAL ENGINEER (PFT)	NMSS
Retirements		
None		
Departures		
DEVITTO, Richard	INVESTIGATOR (PFT)	OI

Office of Public Affairs
Items of Interest
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Media Interest

The Lapidary Journal interviewed Steve Baggett, NMSS, about the use of linear accelerators and reactors to produce better quality gemstones as part of an investigation into the illicit production of irradiated gems overseas.

Region III staff representatives were interviewed by the Chicago Tribune on Big Rock Point's decommissioning plans and dry cask storage.

A Chicago Tribune reporter and ComEd employees were able to watch the Commission meeting with Commonwealth Edison via videoconference.

School Volunteers Program

Virginia Colten-Bradley, NMSS, discussed geology with fourth graders from Oakland Terrace E.S.

John Craig, RES, was shadowed by two students from Magruder H.S. interested in careers in science and engineering. Don Marksberry, AEOD, gave them a tour of the Operations Center and Debbie Jackson, RES, led them on a video tour of a power plant at the Technology Center.

Daniel Rom, NMSS, spoke to students at Fields Road E.S. about structures and buildings.

Jan Strasma, Region III, spoke to the Michigan Chapter of the American Nuclear Society on "Nuclear Communication in the Internet Age."

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
97-163	NRC Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste to Meet November 20-22, 1997, in Rockville, Maryland
97-164	NRC Releases Remediated Uranium Processing Site in Wyoming for Unrestricted Use
97-165	NRC Posts Strategic Plan on Web Page
97-166	Note to Editors: Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste reports on High Level Waste

97-167	NRC Proposes Regulation on Availability of Information for High-Level Radioactive Waste Repository Licensing Proceeding
97-168	NRC Schedules Workshop in Rockville, Maryland, on Demonstrating Compliance with Cleanup Criteria
Regions:	
I-97-143	NRC Rates Pilgrim as "Good" in Latest Assessment of Performance; Engineering Area Found to Have Declined From Previous Period
I-97-144	NRC Staff Proposes to Fine Niagara Mohawk \$50,000 for Maintenance Rule Violations at Nine Mile Point Unit 1
I-97-145	Status of Improvements to Calvert Cliffs Radiation Safety Program Will be the Subject of November 13, 1997, Meeting Between NRC and BG&E
I-97-146	NRC, Utility to Discuss Millstone Recovery Efforts on November 13, 1997
III-97-95	NRC Staff Rates Duane Arnold "Superior" in Operations, Engineering, and Plant Support and "Good" in Maintenance
IV-97-67	NRC Proposes \$10,000 Fine Against Mattingly for Firing Whistleblower

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Office of the Secretary
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Decision Documents Released to the Public		
Document	Date	Subject
1. SEC Y- 97- 245	10/23/9 7	Staff Options for Resolving a Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-50-63) Relating to a Re-Evaluation of the Policy Regarding Use of Potassium Iodide (KI) After a Severe Accident at a Nuclear Power Plant
Negative Consent Documents Released to the Public		
1. SEC Y- 97- 242	10/20/9 7	Update on the Site Decommissioning Management Plan
2. SEC Y- 97- 229	10/6/97	Graded Quality Assurance/Probabilistic Risk Assessment Implementation Plan for the South Texas Project Electric Generating Station
- SRM on 97- 229	10/30/9 7	(same)
Information Papers Released to the Public		
1. SEC Y- 97- 239	10/17/9 7	Plan for Increased Cooperative Research with Industry and Other Federal Agencies (DSI-22)
2. SEC Y- 97- 246	10/23/9 7	Information on Staff Actions to Address Electric Grid Reliability Issues--WITS No. 9700205
3. SEC Y- 97- 247	10/23/9 7	Weekly Information Report - Week Ending October 17, 1997

4.	SEC Y- 97- 248	10/23/9 7	Staff Requirements Memorandum - Briefing on the Business Process Redesign Project on the Redesigned Materials Licensing Process (SECY-97-034)
5.	SEC Y- 97- 255	10/29/9 7	Weekly Information Report - Week Ending October 24, 1997
6.	SEC Y- 97- 258	10/31/9 7	Proposed Supplement to Generic Letter 96-06, "Assurance of Equipment Operability and Containment Integrity During Design-Basis Accident Conditions"

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Memoranda Released to the Public

1.	M971 105B	11/5/97	Affirmation Session, 11:30 A.M. and 3:00 P.M., Wednesday, November 5, 1997: I. SECY-97-232 - Final Rule on Exempt Distribution and Use of a Radioactive Drug Containing One Microcurie of Carbon 14 Urea (Parts 30 and 32); II. SECY-97-228 - Final Amendments to 10 CFR Part 73, "Changes to Nuclear Power Plant Security Requirements"
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Commission Correspondence Released to the Public

1. Letter to Charles Meinhold, National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, dated 10/30/97 provides nominations for NCRP membership
2. Letter to Senators Dodd and Lieberman and Representative Gejdenson dated 10/30/97 concerns contaminated soil at Haddam Neck
3. Letter to Dr. Ching-Piao Hu, Taiwan Atomic Energy Council, dated 10/29/97 concerns the 1997 AIT-TECRO JSC Annual Meeting in November
4. Letter to Dr. Gordon Sibiya, Republic of South Africa Deputy Director General, dated 10/29/97 provides comments on the draft South African Nuclear Safety Act and Nuclear Energy Act
5. Letter to Dr. Gregory Geoffrey, University of Maryland, dated 10/29/97 concerns the future of the University's graduate program in nuclear engineering

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Proposed Rule: 10 CFR Part 2; Procedures Applicable to Proceedings for the Issuance of Licenses for the Receipt of High-Level Radioactive Waste at a Geologic Repository

Region I
Items of Interest
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Broken Tritium Exit Sign

On October 30, 1997, the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, notified the NRC that a patient at the Arthur Brisbane Child Treatment Center (a State of New Jersey psychiatric care facility), Farmingdale, New Jersey, had severely damaged an exit sign containing approximately 13 curies of tritium in his bedroom the previous day. The patients were immediately evacuated and were showered to remove any tritium contamination. Upon notification, Region I promptly dispatched personnel to the site to gather additional information and obtain wipe samples from various locations as well as to provide facility staff and local officials with perspective on the relative radiological hazards involved. Wipe sample results showed contamination throughout the affected building (Cottage B) as well as an onsite transport truck (used by the facility to move the broken sign to a remote storage location) and the storage area. The licensee (the State of New Jersey) hired a contractor to perform urinalysis and dose assessment on those involved in the incident and to decontaminate affected areas. The urinalysis results indicate that the highest dose received was 16.7 millirem (to the patient who broke the sign). Doses received by other personnel and patients all were less than 2 millirem. No health effects are anticipated at these dose levels. The facility has been decontaminated by the licensee's contractor. The State will perform confirmatory surveys and release the area for unrestricted use when the amount of remaining activity is less than 1000 disintegrations per minute per 100 square centimeters. In addition, all the tritium exit signs have been removed from the facility, secured, and will be transferred back to the manufacturer, with the possible exception of the broken sign. They will be replaced with non-tritium signs. Region I is continuing coordination and follow up on this incident with the State of New Jersey to ensure proper final decontamination of the facility.

Region II
Items of Interest
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Virginia Electric and Power Company - North Anna

On October 29, 1997, Region II granted a Notice of Enforcement Discretion (NOED) for Unit 1 to extend their allowed outage time for the 1H Emergency Diesel Generator (EDG) from 72 hours to 7 days. The radiator cooling fan had catastrophically failed on October 26, 1997. New fan blades, a new fan hub, and a combination of used and new radiator components were used to repair the EDG cooling system. Post-maintenance tests were performed, and the technical specification action statement and NOED were exited at 2:30 a.m. on November 1, 1997.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Sequoyah

On November 5, 1997, Sequoyah unit 2 identified inconsistent core flux distribution while at 30 percent power following startup from a refueling outage. In consultation with the fuel vendor, Framatome Cogema Fuels, the licensee determined that 16 new fuel assemblies, with gadolina burnable poison rods, had been loaded into core locations different than planned. The burnable poison rods have two different patterns (8 assemblies each) and the loading procedures had the patterns reversed. This was identified during in-core instrument flux mapping tests. The licensee and vendor imposed a temporary restriction of 75 percent power until the resolution could be determined. The licensee determined that the core reload analysis remained valid with the existing configuration. The licensee also determined that the problem did not represent an unanalyzed condition warranting reporting to the NRC. The only change necessary was to modify the core flux mapping software to match the core characteristics. This was completed as of November 8, 1997, and the licensee subsequently increased power to 100 percent. The apparent cause of the problem was incorrect communication from the vendor to the licensee on the loading plan.

Region IV
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WNP Oversight Panel Meeting

On November 6, 1997, the NRC's WNP-2 Oversight Panel met with the Washington Public Power Supply System to discuss the status of WNP-2 and its programs for improving performance. This meeting was conducted in the Washington Public Power Supply System office in Richland, Washington. This discussion is part of the ongoing meetings with the licensee which began in 1995.