

50-327/328



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 16, 1999

Mr. J. A. Scalice
Chief Nuclear Officer and
Executive Vice President
Tennessee Valley Authority
6A Lookout Place
1101 Market Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

SUBJECT: SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2 - SITE-SPECIFIC
WORKSHEETS FOR USE IN THE NRC'S SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATION
PROCESS (TAC NO. MA6544)

Dear Mr. Scalice:

As a participant in the pilot plant review of the revised reactor oversight program, you are aware of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) efforts to develop a Significance Determination Process (SDP) for use by the NRC to provide a risk characterization to inspection findings. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the enclosed Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook, which contains site-specific SDP worksheets that inspectors will be using to characterize inspection findings on the basis of risk. The SDP is discussed in more detail below.

On January 8, 1999, the NRC staff described to the Commission plans and recommendations to improve the reactor oversight process. These staff recommendations were contained in SECY-99-007, "RECOMMENDATION FOR REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS." This document is available on the NRC's Web Site and can be accessed at www.nrc.gov/NRC/COMMISSION/SECYS/index.html. The new process, developed with stakeholder involvement, is designed around a risk-informed framework, which is intended to focus both NRC and NRC licensee attention and resources on those issues of more risk significance.

The performance assessment portion of the new process involves the use of both licensee submitted performance indicator data and inspection findings that have been appropriately categorized based on their risk significance. In order to properly categorize an inspection finding, the NRC has developed the SDP. This process was also described to the Commission in SECY 99-007A, dated March 22, 1999, also available on the above noted web site.

The SDP for power operations involves evaluating an inspection finding's impact on the plant's capability to (1) limit the frequency of initiating events, (2) ensure the availability, reliability, and capability of mitigating systems, and (3) ensure the integrity of the fuel cladding, reactor coolant system, and containment barriers. The SDP involves the use of three tables. Table 1 is the estimated likelihood for initiating event occurrence during a degraded period. Table 2 describes how the significance is determined based on remaining mitigation system capabilities and Table 3 provides the bases for the failure probabilities associated with the remaining mitigation equipment and strategies.

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PDR ADOCK.

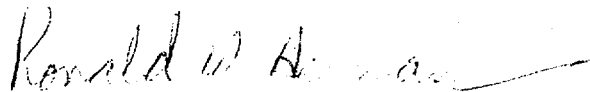
Mr. J. A. Scalice

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As a result of the recent pilot plant review effort, the NRC has determined that site-specific risk data is needed in order to provide a repeatable determination of the significance of an issue. Therefore, the NRC has contracted with Brookhaven National Laboratory to develop site-specific worksheets to be used in the SDP review. The enclosed notebook contains worksheets for the Sequoyah Nuclear Plant that were developed based on your Individual Plant Examination (IPE) submittal requested by Generic Letter 88-20. The NRC plans to use this site-specific information in evaluating the significance of issues identified at your facility. It was recognized that the IPE utilized during this effort may contain information that is not completely current. Therefore, the NRC conducted a site visit to your facility and discussed appropriate changes with your staff, which have been incorporated in the enclosed notebook. We are not requesting written comments on the notebook, which is enclosed only for your information.

If there is a need to conduct additional follow-up visits, we will coordinate our efforts through your Sequoyah site licensing organization. If you have any questions, please contact me at (301) 415-2010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald W. Hernan".

Ronald W. Hernan, Senior Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-327 and 50-328

Enclosure: Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook
for Sequoyah Nuclear Plant

cc w/enclosure: See next page

SEQUOYAH NUCLEAR PLANT

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Sincerely,

Original signed by:

Ronald W. Hernan, Senior Project Manager, Section 2
Project Directorate II
Division of Licensing Project Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-327 and 50-328

Enclosure: Risk-Informed Inspection Notebook
for Sequoyah Nuclear Plant

cc w/enclosure: See next page

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