

February 23, 1996

SECY 96-038

For: The Commissioners

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

Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 16,
1996

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*No input this week.

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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Attendance at ISA 67.16 Standard Committee Meeting on Digital Systems Design Criteria

During the week of February 12, 1996, Paul Loeser of the Instrumentation and Controls Branch attended the ISA 67.16 Standard committee meeting in Houston, Texas. ISA 67.16 is a new standard being developed to provide guidance on the design of digital instrumentation and controls systems. The NRC staff participation is intended to ensure that concerns identified from previous reviews of digital systems are being incorporated into industry proposed guidelines. The staff may eventually endorse ISA 67.16 in its guidelines.

San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, Units 2 and 3

Receiving considerable media attention was the discovery of 4 kittens, approximately 3 weeks old, in the Unit 1 area on February 1st. The kittens had an initial reading of 6000 counts/min, which declined to 1000 counts/min after they were shampooed. Cesium-137 accounts for approximately 98% of the current readings, with the remainder being Cesium-134 and Cobalt-60. The licensee theorizes that the kittens' mother became contaminated through contact with contaminated areas on the Unit 1 side that are exposed to the environment. The day before the kittens were found an adult female cat found onsite, presumably the mother, was taken to the other side of Interstate 5 and released by licensee personnel. The remains of a adult female cat, later determined to be slightly radioactive, was found this week on Interstate 5, and is being held in a frozen state by the licensee. The licensee plans to keep the kittens until their radiation levels have dropped to an acceptable level, and then allow the kittens to be adopted.

Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

The Interagency Steering Committee on Radiation Standards Recycle Subcommittee

The Interagency Steering Committee on Radiation Standards (ISCORS) Recycle Subcommittee met February 5, 1996. One highlight of the meeting was a consensus among representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Department of Defense, and Department of Energy (DOE) that given the current budget situation, recycle rulemaking would proceed one step at a time. It was agreed that the first step should address recycling of metals. The subcommittee will raise to ISCORS several rulemaking issues including: (1) whether to include naturally occurring and accelerator-produced radioactive material in a recycle rule; (2) whether there is a need to establish a separate threshold for defining whether a metal is contaminated as opposed to defining the acceptable activity for unconditional release; and (3) defining who is to be protected by the rule (e.g., maximally exposed person vs. average public dose). Another major topic was DOE, EPA and NRC staff discussion of the results of their "benchmarking" of dose models for recycling. There was general agreement that a technical meeting of the agencies and their contractors should be held to further explore the differences between the modeling approaches and to come to agreement on parameters and assumptions.

First Meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency Waste Safety Standards Advisory Committee

The first meeting of the newly-organized Waste Safety Standard Advisory Committee took place at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria, during the period February 5-9, 1996. The meeting was attended by representatives of 14 countries and one international organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Nuclear Energy Agency.

The IAEA Secretariat proposed to the Committee a revised document hierarchy for the Radioactive Waste Safety Standards program, which placed increased emphasis on safety standards and guides dealing with control of discharges and restoration of contaminated sites, and reduced emphasis on management and disposal of radioactive wastes, management of uranium mill tailings, and decommissioning of nuclear facilities. A number of the Secretariat's recommendations for combining standards on management and disposal of radioactive wastes were not accepted by the Committee, who recommended that IAEA proceed expeditiously to complete a Safety Standard on Near Surface Disposal of Radioactive Waste, as well as two Safety Guides related to this topic. These recommendations will be considered at the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on Safety Standards, which is scheduled for March 18-22, 1996.

Implementation of International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards

A meeting of the Subgroup on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards in the U.S. was held on February 13, 1996, at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Headquarters. Representatives of the Department of State, Department of Energy (DOE), and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency participated in the meeting which focused primarily on the status of IAEA safeguards implementation in the U.S. Issues discussed included delays in reporting the initial inventory listings for excess weapons material at DOE facilities currently under IAEA safeguards, the status of the downblending of material at an NRC-licensed facility, and the addition of the gaseous diffusion enrichment plants to the Eligible Facility List for IAEA safeguards.

Course on Fuel Cycle Sampling and Measurement

The pilot course, Mechanics of Sampling and Measurement for Fuel Cycle Facilities, was given for the first time on February 6-8, 1996. Modules were presented on general principles and concerns in sampling, plus specific sampling operations at each type of plant.

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

NAS Meeting on Rock Fracture Characterization & Fluid Flow

On January 25, 1996, the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Board on Earth Sciences and Resources briefed the project sponsors on the recently completed "Fracture Characterization and Fluid Flow" report. RES was a sponsor of the NAS project along with DOE (Geothermal, Environmental Restoration, Energy Research, Fossil Energy, etc.), Bureau of Mines, EPA, Defense Nuclear Agency and NSF. The NAS report presents the state-of-the-science in the understanding of several geologic-hydrologic topics, including: physical characteristics of fractures; physical properties and fundamental processes in fractures; fracture detection methods; hydraulic and tracer testing of fractured rocks; field-scale flow and transport models; and induced changes in fracture properties. The NAS report presents case histories which illustrate the application of the methods and conceptual models discussed. The NAS report provides the technical community with the latest information on fracture characterization, conceptual flow and transport models, and geophysical and field testing methods. This information is relevant to NRC staff technical needs in a variety of licensing areas related to ground-water and contaminant transport in fractured rock (e.g., LLW, uranium recovery, SDMP and HLW).

FARO Fuel-Coolant Interactions (FCI) Experiment L-20

The FARO Fuel-Coolant Interactions (FCI) experiment L-20 was performed successfully at the Joint Research Center (JRC), Ispra, on January 30, 1996. This experiment is the sixth in a series of large-scale experiments investigating the quenching of prototypic melt mass in a deep water pool typical of in-vessel (lower plenum) FCI conditions. The first five FARO experiments were all conducted at 5 MPa, again typical of in-vessel conditions whereas, this sixth experiment was conducted at 2 MPa to investigate specifically the effect of system pressure on melt fragmentation and coolability. Preliminary data indicates that the melt was largely fragmented and quenched. Further analysis of data is continuing to quantify the effect of pressure on melt fragmentation. The maximum pressure rise in the test section was in reasonable agreement with the values obtained in the pretest calculations using a number of FCI codes. The calculations were carried out by JRC and other international research organizations as an analytical exercise to determine the adequacy of FCI codes. A meeting of the FARO Expert Group is scheduled on March 25-26, 1996, to discuss the results of L-20 in detail. The NRC is a participant in the cooperative FARO program under a Technical Exchange Arrangement with the Safety Technology Institute of the Commission of European Communities. Under the Arrangement, which is effective through December 1998, the JRC will produce experimental data on FCI ranging from quenching to explosion potential of prototypic melt under various initial and boundary conditions representative of both in-vessel and ex-vessel FCI scenarios.

Direct Containment Heating

On February 13, 1996, the Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) conducted the last integral experiment in the Surtsey facility (1/10 scale) to investigate direct containment heating (DCH) due to a hypothetical high pressure melt ejection (HPME) accident in a Combustion Engineering (CE) plant. The results of this test will be used to validate the modelling to support the resolution of the DCH issue for the CE plants.

The configuration of the CE design chosen was an "annular cavity design" similar to that of the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant which represents a significant portion of the CE plants. The accident scenario which served as the basis for testing included a large amount of water in the reactor pressure vessel at the time of HPME. The design as well as the accident scenario were chosen with inputs and recommendations from a technical review group consisting of S. Levy (Levy & Associates), M. Ishii (Purdue University), R. Henry (Fauske & Associates), M. Corradini (Univ. of Wisconsin), F. Moody (General Electric) and SNL's consultant R. Schneider (ABB Combustion Engineering).

Since, September 1995, seven DCH tests were run. The purpose of these tests was to study the affects of co-dispersed water on the transport of corium during a HPME. Thirty three kilograms of iron oxide/aluminum/alumina thermite was used as a corium melt simulant. Following the thermite reaction, water or steam was ejected from an accumulator through a simulated reactor pressure vessel to entrain the melt out of the reactor cavity. The initial containment vessel conditions included inerted atmospheres as well as prototypic air-steam atmospheres with pre-existing hydrogen. With these various atmosphere compositions, the experiments investigated a range of accident conditions, including clad oxidation with hydrogen release to the containment atmosphere. The peak pressure measured in the vessel ranged from 64 psia to 80 psia for conditions tested. For all tests, the initial vessel pressure was around 2 bar (30 psia) at the initiation of the transient. For the next few months, SNL will be analyzing the tests to produce an analysis report on CE DCH testing. All reports on DCH as it relates to operating PWRs will be completed by August 1996.

Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Incident Response Division (IRD)

Emergency Response Branch (ERB)

Frank Congel, Rich Barrett, and Joe Giitter of IRD, conducted a tour of the Operations Center and a briefing on the mission of the NRC for Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan on Thursday, February 15, 1996. Mr. Duncan, accompanied by three of his aides, also met briefly with Chairman Jackson and toured the TWFN auditorium.

Preliminary Notifications

- a. PNO-IV-96-007, Agra Earth & Environmental, Inc., STOLEN CAMPBELL PACIFIC NUCLEAR MOISTURE DENSITY GAUGE
- b. PNO IV-96-008, NDC Systems, LEAKING AMERICIUM-241 SOURCES

Office of Administration
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

U. S. Enrichment Corporation

On February 14, 1996, the Division of Security (SEC) received Revision 2 to USEC's application for a certificate of compliance for the Portsmouth and Paducah gaseous diffusion plants (GDPs). Revision 2 incorporates responses to NRC questions on Revision 1 of the application, and reflects recent organizational changes at the GDPs. SEC will attend a meeting with NMSS and USEC personnel on February 16, 1996, to discuss the status of USEC's certification and any unresolved issues.

Security Policy Board (SPB)

On February 14, 1996, Wayne Burnside, Sr. Information Security Specialist, attended a Safeguards Directive Working Group meeting to discuss E. O. 12958, Classified National Security Information, and the SPB's requirement to provide an implementing directive to the President on safeguarding classified information. The Working Group is starting over with original agency comments received on a June 1995 draft, and will likely take several months to develop a new directive for comment.

National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists:
Filing of Petition for Rulemaking (PRM-35-13)

A notice of receipt of a petition for rulemaking submitted by the National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists (NRRPT) was published in the Federal Register on February 8, 1996 (61 FR 4753). The petitioner requests that the Commission amend its regulations by including acceptance of NRRPT registration as fulfilling some of the requirements for a radiation safety officer. The comment period on this petition closes April 23, 1996.

Reporting Reliability and Availability Information for
Risk-Significant Systems and Equipment (Part 50)

A proposed rule that would require licensees for commercial nuclear power reactors to report plant-specific reliability and availability data for risk-significant systems and equipment was published in the Federal Register on February 12, 1996 (61 FR 5318). The proposed rule would also require that licensees maintain records and documentation that provide the basis for the summary data reported to the NRC and make this information available for NRC inspection. The comment period for this proposed rule closes June 11, 1996.

Significant FOIA Requests Received During Period of February 9-14, 1996:

Request for listing of non-medical licensees within the states of Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. (Erik Nielson; Heritage Laboratories, Inc.; FOIA-96-055)

Request for summary of unusual events, alerts, & site area emergencies for calendar year 1995. (Ophelia Williams; J/R/A Associates; FOIA-96-057)

Request for copies of FOIA annual reports for 1992 through 1994. (Individual; FOIA-96-058)

Request for records related to an investigation at the University of Cincinnati on 8/25/89 and 9/19/89 through 11/1/89. (Robert Griffin of Taft, Stettinius & Hollister; FOIA-96-059)

Request for a listing of licensees under 10 CFR 30, 40, 70, & 72 not in compliance with the July 26, 1995 Federal Register Notice on Final Rule on Clarification of Decommissioning Funding Requirements. (Lance Hughes; Native Americans for a Clean Environment; FOIA-96-061)

Request for listing of I.M.P.A.C. government credit card holders with addresses. (Kerri Winters; Comark Government & Education Sales; FOIA-96-062)

Request for a copy of the response to a Notice of Violation to Bechtel Corporation (EA-95-235) and a Notice of Violation to Commonwealth Edison Company (EA-95-144). (Individual; FOIA-96-063)

Office of Personnel
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Recruitment Interviews Conducted to Support Hiring Needs of Region III and the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS)

On February 12, 1996, Monte Phillips, RIII, and Tom Yingst conducted interviews at the University of Illinois. This effort produced two strong candidates for Region III and one for NMSS. On February 14, 1996, Tom Yingst interviewed graduates from the University of Wisconsin for the same positions. Five exceptional applicants were referred to Region III for consideration. On February 15, 1996, B.J. Holt, Region III, and Tom Yingst interviewed twelve applicants from the Graduate School at the University of Michigan. Region III is interested in three of the applicants and three applicants were referred to NMSS for consideration.

Career Fair Attended in Seattle, Washington

On February 17, 1996, Tom Yingst attended the career fair hosted by the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers in Seattle, Washington. Eight very qualified applicants with education and experience related to the nuclear industry were referred to Region III and NMSS.

Arrivals

FRANOVICH, Michael	PROJECT ENGINEER (PFT)	NMSS
KELLER, Lee	SENIOR RESIDENT INSPECTOR (PFT)	RIV
SUPPLE, Mark	CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR (OPFT)	OIG

Retirements

KOMMERS, Pat	PERSONNEL ASSISTANT (OPFT)	RIII
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Departures

BLATCHFORD, Carlotta	SECRETARY (OA) (PFT)	OIG
PHARR, Elizabeth	RADIATION SPECIALIST (PFT)	RII

Office of Public Affairs
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Media Interest

Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan visited with Chairman Jackson and toured the Operations Center in an effort to meet with all federal agency directors located in Montgomery County.

Chairman Jackson held press conferences coinciding with her visits to North Anna, Surry and the B&W Naval Nuclear Fuels Division. A variety of television and press media attended each location.

School Volunteers Program

Jeryll Dorsey, IRM, discussed computers at Weller Rd. E.S. and Louis Numkin, IRM, talked about computer ethics at Gaithersburg H.S. Martie Lopez-Nagel, OIG, participated in an "interview clinic" at Atholton H.S.

Press Releases

Headquarters:

96-30	Dr. Thomas S. Kress Reelected ACRS Chairman Dr. Robert L. Seale, Reelected Vice-Chairman
96-31	NRC Seeks Qualified Candidates for Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste
96-32	NRC Media Workshop Scheduled
96-33	NRC Advisory Committee to Discuss National Academy Study on Medical Uses of Nuclear Material
96-34	NRC Staff Proposes \$100,000 Fine Against PP&L for Alleged Discrimination Against an Employee at Susquehanna
96-36	NRC Proposes Reporting Requirements for Risk-Significant Reactor Systems
ACRS-3	Note to Editors -- ACRS Meeting

Regions:

96-11	NRC to Hold Public Meeting at Conclusion of Augmented Inspection Team Visit Followed by Press Conference
I-96-11	NRC Chairman to Tour Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant
II-96-21	NRC Staff Proposes \$80,000 Civil Penalty Against TVA for Alleged Discrimination at Browns Ferry

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

EURATOM Assurances for NRC-Licensed Exports of Reactor Components

The staff was advised on February 16 that the U.S. Government has received from the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) the assurances required under Section 109b of the Atomic Energy Act which permit the resumption of NRC-licensed exports of minor reactor components and other commodities and items. The December 31, 1995 suspension of U.S. exports to EURATOM remains in effect for exports of reactors, major reactor components, and reactor fuel, all of which require the entry into force of the new U.S.-EURATOM Agreement for Cooperation which awaits the completion of the required 90-day review period in the Congress. That review period may be completed as early as next month.

IAEA Vacancy Notices

The following notices from the International Atomic Energy Agency have been posted on NRC bulletin boards:

P-3	Research Scientist Research & Isotopes	96/002
P-3	Technical Writer Nuclear Safety	96/003
P-3	Soil Scientist/Plant Nutritionist Research & Isotopes	96/004
P-2	Reference Librarian (Serials) Nuclear Energy	96/005
P-2	Development Programmer Nuclear Energy	96/006
P-3	Library Systems Analyst Nuclear Energy	96/007
P-3	Nuclear Instrumentation Physicist Research & Isotopes	96/008

Office of Congressional Affairs
 Items of Interest
 Week Ending February 16, 1996

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING SCHEDULE

No. 51

OCA ASSIGN- MENT	DATE & PLACE	TIME	WITNESS	SUBJECT	COMMITTEE
Keeling	02/28/96 TBA	9:30	GAO, DOS, DOE, ACDA	Euratom Agreement	Senators Stevens/Glenn Governmental Affairs
Gerke	03/06/96	TBA	DOE, State PUCs	State Electricity Restructuring Efforts	Senators Murkowski/Johnston Energy & Natural Resources
Madden	03/26/96 2362B RHOB	2:00	DOE	Nuclear Waste Issues	Reps. Myers/Bevill Energy and Water Development Appropriations
Madden	03/27/96 2362B RHOB	2:00	Commission*	FY 97 Appropriations	Reps. Myers/Bevill Energy and Water Development Appropriations

*A letter of invitation has been received for this hearing.

Region I
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Water Sampling at Bankrupt General Licensee

Interstate Thermal Energy Conversion, Inc. (ITEC) is a bankrupt corporation in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, that possessed ten generally licensed cesium-137 gauges. An NRC inspection in December 1995 determined that two of these gauges were in a room that was under water because of high groundwater in the area. On February 12, 1996, an NRC inspector collected water samples from the flooded room at the ITEC facility to determine whether there had been any leakage of the radioactive material from the gauges. The samples will be analyzed in the Region I laboratory. Region I continues to maintain contact with the trustee for ITEC to ensure the safe disposal of the gauges, and will take appropriate action if any radioactivity is identified in the water samples.

Meeting to Discuss Traceability of NRC Laboratories to NIST

On February 12, 1996, staff from the RI Decommissioning and Laboratory Branch attended a meeting at NIST to discuss traceability by the NRC Regional Laboratories and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) laboratory of sample results to NIST standards. Also attending the meeting were staff from NMSS, NIST, and Region III and, via telephone, ORISE. The meeting covered issues related to traceability, including split vs. spiked samples, traceability vs. traceable standards, preparation of capability test standards, comparison criteria, and sample matrix. NIST staff requested that NRC prepare a list of required sample characteristics for the radionuclides of interest, including sample matrix, radionuclide concentrations, accuracy and precision requirements, and sample counting geometry. A followup meeting will be hosted by Region I on February 21-22, 1996 for NRC staff to discuss the required sample characteristics and traceability in general.

Region II
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Duke Power Company - Catawba

On February 6, 1996, Catawba Unit 2 tripped from 100 percent power following a loss of offsite power. The unit remained in an Unusual Event for approximately 38 hours until being taken to cold shutdown and offsite power restoration through one of the two main transformers. The apparent cause of the main transformer losses was degraded resistor bushings in the main power potential transformer cabinets in conjunction with excessive moisture resulting in the initiating faults to ground. An NRC team, with the assistance of the resident inspection staff, evaluated the cause of the event, plant and operator response, and licensee recovery actions. The unit is currently in hot shutdown with restart scheduled for February 16.

Chairman's Visit to Lynchburg, Virginia

On February 14, 1996, Chairman Jackson together with headquarters and regional staff visited both licensed and unlicensed facilities in Lynchburg, Virginia. The facilities visited included: Framatome Technologies, Inc. at Old Forest and Mill Ridge Roads, Framatome Cogema Fuels (B&W CNFP), and B&W Naval Nuclear Fuel Division. A press conference was held at 3:30 p.m. at the B&W NNFD facility.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Watts Bar

The licensee shut down on February 11 to a hot standby condition in order to do maintenance on the balance of plant. The principal problem was contamination of the main turbine lubricating oil system. The oil was contaminated with a cellulose fiber, apparently from an oil filtration system. Paint chips were also found. TVA, with Westinghouse assistance, filtered the oil through skid-mounted filters and cleaned the main oil tank. The system was returned to service and the reactor started on February 16.

Representative Zech Wamp, Third District of Tennessee, visited the site on February 13 as a guest of TVA.

Region IV
Items of Interest
Week Ending February 16, 1996

Meeting at WNP-2 Site between NRC and WPPSS

On Thursday, February 15, 1996, the NRC Oversight Panel met with the Washington Public Power Supply System (Supply System) Managing Director and other members of the Supply System staff in Richland, Washington. The Supply System is the licensee for WNP-2. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss performance issues at WNP-2. The Oversight Panel was established in response to continuing performance problems and inconsistent corrective action at WNP-2. Additionally, the NRC and Supply System discussed WNP-2's plans for the upcoming refueling outage in April 1996.

Houston Lighting & Power Company

Houston Industries, the parent company of Houston Lighting & Power, which operates South Texas Project nuclear plant, announced a major restructuring to form five strategic business units. One of these business units will be Houston Lighting & Power. Houston Lighting & Power will form three business units, one of which will be the South Texas Project nuclear plant. This does not impact the South Texas Project internal structure. This reorganization is intended to enhance the company's ability to respond to deregulation and other industry changes.

Nebraska Public Power District (Cooper Nuclear Station)

On February 12, 1996, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Nebraska Public Power District, Bill Mayben, announced changes to the senior management structure of the utility. The changes will not be effective until April or May 1996. The changes included the promotions of Guy Horn from Vice President of Nuclear to Senior Vice President of Energy Supply and John Mueller from Site Manager of Cooper Nuclear Station to Vice President of Nuclear. The promotion of Mr. Mueller will give him direct access to the publicly elected Board of Directors of the district. The site organizational structure following the promotion of Mr. Mueller is yet to be determined.

Wolf Creek Exit Meeting

On February 15, 1996, the Regional Administrator, Region IV, accompanied by the Public Affairs Officer, Region IV, attended the public exit meeting at Wolf Creek Generating Station for the Augmented Inspection Team which was dispatched in response to a plant shutdown stemming from the icing of the circulation water and essential service water intake structures. A press conference was conducted following the exit meeting.

Waterford 3 Management Change

On February 13, 1996, Entergy Operations, Inc. announced that Mike Sellman, General Manager, Plant Operations, River Bend Station would replace Ross Barkhurst, Vice President Operations, Waterford 3, effective February 13, 1996. Mr. Barkhurst was reassigned to the Entergy Operations, Inc. corporate office in Jackson, MS. The licensee had not named a replacement for the General Manager, Plant Operations at River Bend Station.