

Moisture carryover levels remained above normal, and on June 11, 2003, the licensee shut down QC-2 to inspect the dryer. Inspection of the dryer revealed (1) through-wall cracks (about 90 inches long) in the vertical and horizontal portions of the outer bank hood, 90-degree side, (2) one vertical and two diagonal internal braces detached on the outer bank hood, 90-degree side, (3) one severed vertical internal brace on the outer bank hood, 270-degree side, and (4) three cracked tie bars on top of the dryer. A root cause analysis by the licensee is in progress. The licensee believes the most probable cause of the failure is low-frequency, high-cycle fatigue driven by flow-induced vibrations associated with the higher steam flows present during EPU operating conditions.

Discussion

GE Nuclear Energy and the licensee did not foresee this phenomenon. GE Nuclear Energy, the licensee, and the NRC are evaluating this event with regard to its generic implications for plants that are operating with or planning to apply for an extended power uprate. Licensees should be alert to the possibility of similar unanticipated effects from increasing flow, power, or differential pressure associated with a major modification such as an extended power uprate.

This information notice requires no specific action or written response. If you have any questions about the information in this notice, please contact one of the technical contacts listed below or the appropriate Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) project manager.

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