

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

July 26, 1979

IE Bulletin Nos. 79-05C & 79-06C

NUCLEAR INCIDENT AT THREE MILE ISLAND - SUPPLEMENT

Description of Circumstances:

Information has become available to the NRC, subsequent to the issuance of IE Bulletins 79-05, 79-05A, 79-05B, 79-06, 79-06A, 79-06A (Revision 1) and 79-06B, which requires modification to the "Action To Be Taken By Licensees" portion of IE Bulletins 79-05A, 79-06A and 79-06B, for all pressurized water reactors (PWRs).

Item 4.c of Bulletin 79-05A required all holders of operating licenses for Babcock & Wilcox designed PWRs to revise their operating procedures to specify that, in the event of high pressure injection (HPI) initiation with reactor coolant pumps (RCPs) operating, at least one RCP per loop would remain operating. Similar requirements, applicable to reactors designed by other PWR vendors, were contained in Item 7.c of Bulletin 79-06A (for Westinghouse designed plants) and in Item 6.c of Bulletin 79-06B (for Combustion Engineering designed plants).

Prior to the incident at Three Mile Island Unit 2 (TMI 2), Westinghouse and its licensees generally adopted the position that the operator should promptly trip all operating RCPs in the loss of coolant accident (LOCA) situation. This Westinghouse position, has led to a series of meetings between the NRC staff and Westinghouse, as well as with other PWR vendors, to discuss this issue. In addition, more detailed analyses concerning this matter were requested by the NRC. Recent preliminary calculations performed by Babcock & Wilcox, Westinghouse and Combustion Engineering indicate that, for a certain spectrum of small breaks in the reactor coolant system, continued operation of the RCPs can increase the mass lost through the break and prolong or aggravate the uncovering of the reactor core.

The damage to the reactor core at TMI 2 followed tripping of the last operating RCP, when two phase fluid was being pumped through the reactor coolant system. It is our current understanding that all three of the nuclear steam system suppliers for PWRs now agree that an acceptable action under LOCA symptoms is to trip all operating RCPs immediately, before significant voiding in the reactor coolant system occurs.

Action To Be Taken By Licensees:

In order to alleviate the concern over delayed tripping of the RCPs after a LOCA, all holders of operating licenses for PWR facilities shall take the following actions:

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Short-Term Actions

1. In the interim, until the design change required by the long-term action of this Bulletin has been incorporated, institute the following actions at your facilities:
 - A. Upon reactor trip and initiation of HPI caused by low reactor coolant system pressure, immediately trip all operating RCPs.
 - B. Provide two licensed operators in the control room at all times during operation to accomplish this action and other immediate and followup actions required during such an occurrence. For facilities with dual control rooms, a total of three licensed operators in the dual control room at all times meets the requirements of this Bulletin.
2. Perform and submit a report of LOCA analyses for your plants for a range of small break sizes and a range of time lapses between reactor trip and pump trip. For each pair of values of the parameters, determine the peak cladding temperature (PCT) which results. The range of values for each parameter must be wide enough to assure that the maximum PCT or, if appropriate, the region containing PCTs greater than 2200 degrees F is identified.
3. Based on the analyses done under Item 2 above, develop new guidelines for operator action, for both LOCA and non-LOCA transients, that take into account the impact of RCP trip requirements. For Babcock & Wilcox designed reactors, such guidelines should include appropriate requirements to fill the steam generators to a higher level, following RCP trip, to promote natural circulation flow.
4. Revise emergency procedures and train all licensed reactor operators and senior reactor operators based on the guidelines developed under Item 3 above.
5. Provide analyses and develop guidelines and procedures related to inadequate core cooling (as discussed in Section 2.1.9 of NUREG-0578, "TMI 2 Lessons Learned Task Force Status Report and Short-Term Recommendations") and define the conditions under which a restart of the RCPs should be attempted.

Long-Term Action

1. Propose and submit a design which will assure automatic tripping of the operating RCPs under all circumstances in which this action may be needed.

Schedule

The schedule for the short-term actions of this Bulletin is:

- Item 1: Effective upon receipt of this Bulletin,
- Item 2: Within 30 days of receipt of this Bulletin,
- Item 3: Within 30 days of receipt of this Bulletin,
- Item 4: Within 45 days of receipt of this Bulletin,
- Item 5: October 31, 1979 (as noted in Table B-2 of NUREG-0578, under Item 3).

A schedule for the long-term action required by this Bulletin should be developed and submitted within 30 days of receipt of this Bulletin.

Reports should be submitted to the Director of the appropriate NRC Regional Office with copies forwarded to the Director, Office of Inspection and Enforcement and the Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Washington, D. C. 20555.

Approved by GAO (R0072): clearance expires 7/31/80. Approval was given under a blanket clearance specifically for generic problems.