

DEC 15 1988

Docket Nos. 50-289; 50-320

MEMORANDUM FOR: Lee H. Bettenhausen, Chief, Projects Branch No. 1, Division
of Reactor Projects

FROM: Curtis J. Cowgill, Chief, Reactor Projects Section 1A, ORP

SUBJECT: TMI STATUS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER 5 - DECEMBER 3, 1988

Enclosed is the TMI Resident Office monthly status report, which covers both TMI-1 and TMI-2. This report is to provide NRC management and the public with highlights of significant events at TMI-1 and TMI-2 from an NRC regulatory perspective.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY


Curtis J. Cowgill, Chief
Reactor Projects Section 1A

Enclosure: As Stated

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ENCLOSURE

TMI-1 AND TMI-2 STATUS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
NOVEMBER 5 - DECEMBER 3, 1988

1. TMI-1

a. Facility Operations Summary

During the report period, the licensee operated the plant at full power. No major problems occurred, except the "D" reactor coolant pump No. 1 seal leak-off flow increase. As of December 3, 1988, the TMI-1 reactor was at 100 percent full power with Tave at 579 F and Reactor Coolant System (RCS) pressure at 2150 psig.

b. Items of Special Interest

"D" Reactor Coolant Pump No. 1 Seal Leak-Off Flow Increase

Over the weekend of November 26-27, 1988, the No. 1 seal leak-off flow from the "D" reactor coolant pump (RCP) increased to approximately 6 gallons per minute (gpm). This was in excess of the 3-5 gpm normal flow. The leakage remained high until plant operators adjusted seal injection flow parameters in an attempt to restore leak-off flow to the normal range. Results were positive in that, by December 3, 1988, seal flow had decreased below 5 gpm and was responding normally to seal injection parameter changes. The licensee has made contingency plans to shut down for repair.

2. TMI-2

a. Facility Activities Summary

During this period, the licensee achieved a significant milestone in the defueling process. The licensee completed cutting the Lower Core Support Assembly (LCSA) forging, a thirteen-inch thick metal support structure for the core. This took months to complete, using the underwater plasma arc cutting torch. Between November 17, and 23, 1988, the licensee removed each of four quadrants of the cut-up forging and placed these pieces in the "A" core flood tank as was done with other large portions of the core structure.

Each piece weighed about 3400-4800 pounds. The highest radiation reading was 400 mR/hr at four feet.

Subsequent to this accomplishment, the licensee began the process of removing core debris that was made accessible by forging removal. They found the core debris pile on the lower reactor vessel head higher than originally thought and nearer to the LCSA forging. They loaded pounds of core debris using specially designed systems/tools.

Also, during this period, the licensee reported a vendor identifying a design test problem with the two O-rings used to seal the fuel shipment casks (NUPAC-125B). The problem was that a design leak test of the cask with the existing O-ring material was not done at design cold temperatures (-40 F). Design testing showed the potential for excess leakage using the existing Neoprene material at cold temperatures.

Pending NRC approval, a new O-ring with a different material is planned. The licensee expects to receive this material for changeout by December 6, 1988.

The seventeenth such fuel shipment planned for November 20, 1988, was intentionally delayed because of this problem. The next plate (fourth of five) in the LCSA to be cut is the incore guide support plate, which is only about two inches thick. The licensee expects this to be removed by January 1989.

With respect to decontamination outside the reactor building, the licensee made no substantial progress, as expected. As previously reported, the licensee shifted resource emphasis to defueling activities in the reactor building.

In light of the above, the NRC staff will no longer report on decontamination activities in the auxiliary and fuel handling buildings unless there is a significant development or significant change in facility status within those structures.

b. Items of Special Interest

There were no items of special interest.

3. NRC Staff Activities

The NRC staff assigned on site consisted of the senior resident inspector, two resident inspectors, a project manager (for TMI-2), and a secretary. During the week of November 14-18, 1988, three region-based inspectors reviewed licensee radiological water chemistry and another regional inspector reviewed the licensee security program.

The on-site inspectors participated in the evaluation of the annual licensee emergency exercise. The results of this inspection will be included in NRC Inspection Report No. 50-289/88-27.

During this period, Region I issued the following inspection reports.

TMI-1 (50-289)

-- 88-24 on November 14, 1988, addressing routine safety inspection and the licensee's self-assessment capabilities.

TMI-2 (50-320)

-- 88-16 on November 23, 1988, addressing routine safety inspection of defueling activities.

4. Public Meetings

The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) hearings on the disposal of accident-generated water (AGW) at TMI-2 concluded on November 15, 1988, in Bethesda, Maryland. Proposed findings by GPU Nuclear, the licensee; Susquehanna Valley Alliance, the intervenor; and, the NRC staff will be submitted by January 1989. The board's decision is expected in March 1989.

The next meeting of the Advisory Panel on the Decontamination of TMI-2 will be in early 1989; specifics regarding time and place will be announced in a future monthly status report, as well as routine news releases.