



UNITED STATES
September 22, 1999

J. H. Swailes, Vice President of
Nuclear Energy
Nebraska Public Power District
P.O. Box 98
Brownville, Nebraska 68321

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-298/99-09

Dear Mr. Swailes:

On August 26, 1999, the NRC completed an inspection at the Cooper Nuclear Station reactor facility. The results of the inspection were discussed with Mr. R. A. Sessoms and other members of your staff at the completion of the inspection. The enclosed report presents the results of this inspection.

This inspection was an examination of activities conducted under your license as they relate to radiation safety and compliance with the Commission's rules and regulations and with the conditions of your license. Within these areas, the inspection consisted of a selected examination of procedures and representative records, observations of activities, and interviews with personnel. Specifically, this inspection focused on the implementation of your radioactive material processing and shipping program and the occupational radiation safety performance indicator.

Based on the results of this inspection, the NRC identified one issue of low risk significance that has been entered into your corrective action program and is discussed in the summary of findings and in the body of the attached inspection report. The issue was determined to involve a violation of NRC requirements, but because of its low risk significance, the violation is not cited. If you contest this noncited violation, you should provide a response within 30 days of the date of this inspection report, with the basis for your denial, to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Document Control Desk, Washington DC 20555-0001; with a copies to the Regional Administrator, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Region IV, 611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400, Arlington, Texas 76011, the Director, Office of Enforcement, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; and the NRC Resident Inspector at the Cooper Nuclear Station facility.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter, its enclosure(s), and your response, if requested, will be placed in the NRC Public Document Room (PDR).

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, we will be pleased to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Gail M. Good, Chief
Plant Support Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

Docket No.: 50-298
License No.: DPR-46

Enclosures:
NRC Inspection Report No.
50-298/99-09

cc w/enclosures:
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ENCLOSURE

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV

Docket No.: 50-298
License No.: DPR 46
Report No.: 50-298/99-09
Licensee: Nebraska Public Power District
Facility: Cooper Nuclear Station
Location: P.O. Box 98
Brownville, Nebraska
Dates: August 23-26, 1999
Inspector: Larry Ricketson, P. E., Senior Radiation Specialist
Plant Support Branch
Approved By: Gail M. Good, Chief, Plant Support Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Cooper Nuclear Station NRC Inspection Report No. 50-298/99-09

This announced inspection focused on the licensee's radioactive material processing and shipping programs and the occupational radiation safety performance indicator.

Inspection findings were assessed according to potential risk significance and were assigned colors of GREEN, WHITE, YELLOW, or RED. GREEN findings are indicative of issues that, while not necessarily desirable, represent little risk to safety. WHITE findings would indicate issues with some increased risk to safety, which may require additional NRC inspections. YELLOW findings would be indicative of more serious issues with higher potential risk to safe performance and would require the NRC to take additional actions. RED findings represent an unacceptable loss of margin to safety and would result in the NRC taking significant actions that could include ordering the plant shut down. No individual finding by itself would be indicative of either acceptable or unacceptable performance. The findings, considered in total with other inspection findings and performance indicators, will be used to determine overall plant performance.

Cornerstone: Public Radiation Safety

- Green. The inspector identified a violation for failure to carry out a comprehensive system of planned and periodic audits of the radioactive material packaging and transportation programs in accordance with 10 CFR 71.137. The failure to review all aspects of the radioactive material processing and shipping program could cause programmatic problems to be missed which could ultimately result in unnecessary exposure to radiation workers and members of the public. This violation is being treated as a noncited violation (NCV), consistent with Appendix F of the NRC Enforcement Policy. This violation is in the licensee's corrective action program as Problem Identification Report (Serial Number) 4-03782 (Section 2PS2).

Cornerstone: Occupational Radiation Safety

- No findings.

Report Details

2. RADIATION SAFETY

2PS2 Radioactive Material Processing and Shipping

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector walked down accessible liquid-to-solid radwaste processing systems and reviewed the following items:

- Radioactive waste stream sample analysis results.
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Scaling factors and calculations for difficult-to-measure radionuclides

- Waste classification documentation
- Disposal manifests
- Shipping papers
- Radiation surveys

Because the licensee did not prepare or ship radioactive material during the inspection period, there were no personnel performance observations.

b. Observations and Findings

There were no findings identified and documented during this inspection.

4 OTHER ACTIVITIES

4OA1 Identification and Resolution of Problems

a. Inspection Scope

The inspector reviewed the following items:

- Problem identification reports
- Audits, surveillances, and self-assessments
- Audit scoping plan
- Audit checklist

b. Observations and Findings

The inspector identified one violation of low significance. The violation involved a failure to conduct required audits of the radioactive material packaging and transportation program.

10 CFR Part 71 establishes requirements for packaging, preparation for shipment, and transportation of licensed material. 10 CFR 71.101(b) requires each licensee to establish, maintain, and execute a quality assurance program satisfying each of the applicable criteria of 10 CFR 71.101 - 71.137. 10 CFR 71.137 requires the licensee to carry out a comprehensive system of planned and periodic audits, to verify compliance with all aspects of the quality assurance program, and to determine the effectiveness of the program. The audits must be performed in accordance with written procedures or checklists by appropriately trained personnel not having direct responsibilities in the areas being audited. Audited results must be documented and reviewed by management having responsibility in the area audited. Follow-up action, including reauditing of deficient areas, must be taken where indicated.

The quality assurance organization reviewed some aspects of solid radioactive waste management, waste classification and waste manifesting, but did not review 10 CFR Part 71 requirements. The 1996 Radiation Protection Self-Assessment reviewed selected aspects of transportation activities, but this review was very limited. The inspector reviewed audit scoping documents and the audit checklist and noted that these documents contained no reference to either 10 CFR Part 71 or 49 CFR requirements. The failure to carry out a comprehensive system of planned and periodic audits of 10 CFR Part 71 requirements is a violation of 10 CFR 71.137. The failure to review all aspects of the radioactive material processing and shipping program could cause programmatic problems to be missed which could ultimately result in unnecessary exposure to radiation workers and members of the public.

When asked for the most recent review of 10 CFR Part 71 requirements, the licensee was unable to provide documentation demonstrating an audit of these requirements was conducted. Therefore, the inspector could not determine how long the violation had existed.

Using the Public Radiation Safety Significance Determination Process, the inspector determined that the violation was a green finding. This violation is being treated as a noncited violation (NCV), consistent with Appendix F of the NRC Enforcement Policy. This violation is in the licensee's corrective action program as Problem Identification Report (Serial Number) 4-03782 (NCV 298/9909-01).

4OA2 Performance Indicator Verification

a. Inspection Scope (71151)

The inspector reviewed corrective action program records for high radiation area, very high radiation area, and unplanned exposure occurrences for the past 12 quarters to confirm that the occurrences were properly recorded as performance indicators. The

inspector also reviewed radiological, controlled area exit transactions with exposures greater than 100 mrem and investigated selected examples to determine whether they were within the dose projections of the governing radiation work permits.

b. Observations and findings

There were no findings identified and documented during this inspection.

4OA5 Management Meetings

Exit Meeting Summary

The inspector presented the inspection results to members of licensee management at an exit meeting on August 26, 1999. The licensee acknowledged the findings presented. No proprietary information was identified.

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Licensee

R. Beilke, Licensing Engineer
T. Chard, Manager, Radiation Protection
J. Geyer, Senior Health Physicist, Radiation Protection
B. Houston, Operations Manager, Quality Assurance
D. Jones, Support Crew Leader, Radiation Protection
J. Kuttler, Staff Health Physicist, Radiation Protection
R. McDonald, Staff Health Physicist, Radiation Protection
R. Sessoms, Senior Manager, Quality Assurance
B. Toline, Audit Supervisor, Quality Assurance
R. Uhri, Auditor, Quality Assurance
C. Weers, Radiological Support Supervisor, Radiation Protection

NRC

M. Miller, Senior Resident Inspector

ITEMS OPENED, CLOSED, AND DISCUSSED

Opened

None

Opened and Closed

50-298/9909-01 NCV Failure to carry out a comprehensive system of planned and periodic audits of 10 CFR Part 71 requirements (Section 2PS2).

Closed

None

Discussed

None