

November 20, 2001

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

Reference: Oregon State University TRIGA Reactor (OSTR)
Docket No. 50-243, License No. R-106
NRC Inspection Report No. 50-243/2001-201

Subject: Reply to a Notice of Violation

Gentlemen:

The OSTR staff would like to respectfully reply to the Commission about the Notice of Violation given in NRC Inspection Report No. 50-243/2001-201. We do not contest the violation.

Reason For the Violation

The reason for the violation was a failure to perform a radiation survey to ensure compliance with 10 CFR 20.1501. Specifically, we installed an In-Core Irradiation Tube (ICIT) in the OSTR on Friday, December 3, 1998. On August 13, 1999, during a daily survey of the reactor top, a collimated beam of radiation measuring approximately 7 rem per hour (gamma and neutron) was detected on top of the reactor when the reactor was operating at a power level of one megawatt. This has been determined by the NRC to be a Severity Level IV violation.

Corrective Actions

The following Monday, August 16, 1999, we informed our NRC Project Manager of the situation. On September 8, 1999 we submitted a report to the NRC detailing the cause of the incident and steps taken to correct the situation. Briefly, the report identified the failure to perform an adequate survey as one of the causes.

As stated in the letter of September 8, 1999, the ICIT was redesigned to reduce the radiation area that existed above it. The design modification was initiated on August 16, 1999. An extensive radiation survey was conducted after the original installation of the modified ICIT on September 8, 1999. Furthermore, the reactor top was posted and controlled as a high radiation area whenever an in-core irradiation tube was in place.

Since the letter of September 8, 1999, all in-core irradiation tubes have again been redesigned to further increase the water shielding surrounding the offset bends for each tube. After the installation of each tube, an extensive survey showed a uniform radiation field above the reactor top (no beams present). The reactor top is now controlled as a radiation area, since a high radiation area no longer exists.



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Corrective Actions to Prevent Reoccurrence

As previously stated, the in-core irradiation tubes have been redesigned a second time to optimize the water shielding above and below each offset bend. Furthermore, all 10 CFR 50.59 safety evaluations on these subsequent facility modifications have specifically required a radiation survey as part of the process for approval.

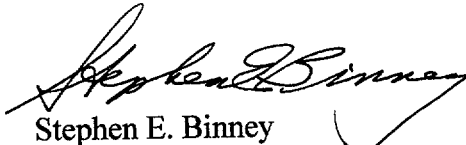
Anticipated Date of Full Compliance

We feel that full compliance has already been met through adequate postings and elimination of the beam through redesigning of the tubes. Regrettably, no documentation of a survey being performed on December 3, 1998, the date of the original installation, could be found. Failure to perform this survey would have certainly identified the beam in a timely fashion.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call me.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Sincerely,


Stephen E. Binney
Director

Executed on: Nov. 20, 2001

cc: Al Adams, USNRC
Craig Bassett, USNRC
Rich Holdren, OSU
Jack Higginbotham, OSU
Steve Reese, OSU
Kathy Brock, OSU