

PRIORITY ATTENTION REQUIRED MORNING REPORT - REGION IV MAY 20, 2003

Licensee/Facility:

Houston Lighting & Power Co.
South Texas 1
Wadsworth, Texas
Dockets: 50-498
PWR/W-4-LP

Notification:

MR Number: **4-03-0002**
Date: 05/20/03
SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM LEADER

Subject: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT BOTTOM MOUNTED INSTRUMENTATION PENETRATIONS
-PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION RESULTS

Reportable Event Number: N/A

Discussion:

This morning report provides a preliminary update of the initial examination results of the leaking bottom mounted instrumentation (BMI) penetrations at South Texas Project, Unit 1 (STP-1).

The licensee has begun examination of the STP-1 BMI penetrations. Nondestructive examination (NDE) techniques currently in use include visual examination of the j-groove welds and ultrasonic (UT) examination using probes that travel inside the nozzles.

Examinations have been performed of the two BMI penetrations (Nos. 1 and 46) identified with boric acid on the exterior surface of the reactor vessel. Results of the ultrasonic examination of each of these penetrations show the presence of axially-oriented indications in the nozzle wall in the vicinity of the j-groove weld that are likely the source of the observed leakage. No indications were identified on the crown of the j-groove weld by the visual examination for either of these penetrations. The licensee plans additional examinations to further characterize the indications and provide additional information for analyses to determine the root cause of this condition.

Nondestructive examinations are in progress for the remaining STP-1 BMI penetrations.

Regional Action:

The NRC Special Inspection Team including NRC inspectors and a consultant NDE expert have been onsite monitoring the licensee's examinations and independently reviewing data. The Special Inspection Team will continue with observations of licensee examinations and evaluation of results.

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