

October 1, 2003

Dr. T. Tehan, Director  
Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center  
Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission  
Reactor Road  
Narragansett, RI 02882-1197

SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT NO. 50-193/2003-203

Dear Dr. Tehan:

This letter refers to the inspection conducted on September 8-11, 2003, at your Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center (RINSC) Research Reactor facility. The inspection included a review of activities authorized for your facility. The enclosed report presents the results of that inspection.

Areas examined during the inspection are identified in the report. Within these areas, the inspection consisted of selective examinations of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, and observations of activities in progress. Based on the results of this inspection, no safety concerns or noncompliances of NRC requirements were identified. No response to this letter is required.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at (the Public Electronic Reading Room) <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

Should you have any questions concerning this inspection, please contact Craig Bassett at 404-562-4712.

Sincerely,

**/RA/**

Patrick M. Madden, Section Chief  
Research and Test Reactors Section  
New, Research and Test Reactors Program  
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No.: 50-193  
License No.: R-95

Enclosure: NRC Inspection Report No. 50-193/2003-203

cc w/enclosures: Please see next page

cc:

Dr. Vincent C. Rose, Chairman  
Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission (RIAEC)  
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Chemical Engineering Department  
118 Crawford Hall  
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Dr. Harry Knickle, Chairman  
Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee  
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Rhode Island Department of Health  
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Test, Research, and Training  
Reactor Newsletter  
University of Florida  
202 Nuclear Sciences Center  
Gainesville, FL 32611

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**U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
**OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION**

Docket No: 50-193

License No: R-95

Report No: 50-193/2003-203

Licensee: Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission

Facility: Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center  
University of Rhode Island

Location: Narragansett, Rhode Island

Date: September 8-11, 2003

Inspector: Craig Bassett

Approved by: Patrick M. Madden, Section Chief  
Research and Test Reactors Section  
New, Research and Test Reactors Program  
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center  
Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission  
Report No.: 50-193/2003-203

This primary focus of this routine, announced inspection was the on-site review of selected aspects of the licensee's two megawatt (2 MW) Class 1 research and test reactor programs concerning organization and staffing, review and audit functions, procedures, operations, design control, operator requalification, fuel movements, maintenance and surveillance, experiments, and emergency preparedness. The licensee's programs were found to be acceptably directed toward the protection of public health and safety and were in compliance with NRC requirements. No safety concerns or violations of regulatory requirements were identified.

### Organization and Staffing

- The organization structure and functions met the requirements specified in Technical Specifications Section 6.0, entitled "Administrative Controls."

### Review and Audit Functions

- Oversight, review, and audit functions required by Technical Specifications Sections 6.1 and 6.4 were acceptably completed by the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee.

### Procedures

- The procedural review, revision, and implementation program satisfied Technical Specification Section 6.5 requirements.

### Operations

- The operations program satisfied Technical Specification and procedural requirements.

### Design Control

- The design change program satisfied 10 CFR 50.59 requirements.

### Operator Requalification Program

- Operator training and requalification was being conducted in accordance with the Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center Operator Requalification Program.

### Fuel Movement and Handling

- The fuel handling and examination program satisfied Technical Specification and licensee procedural requirements.

#### Maintenance and Surveillance

- The maintenance and surveillance program satisfied Technical Specification requirements.

#### Experiments

- The program for reviewing and conducting experiments satisfied Technical Specification and procedural requirements.

#### Emergency Preparedness

- The emergency preparedness program was conducted in accordance with the requirements specified in the approved Emergency Plan.

## REPORT DETAILS

### Summary of Plant Status

The licensee's 2 MW Research Reactor continued to be operated in support of laboratory experiments, operator training, and various types of research. During the inspection, the reactor was started up, operated, and shut down on Tuesday and Thursday to support the irradiation of various tissue samples.

### 1. Organizational Structure and Functions

#### a. Inspection Scope (Inspection Procedure [IP] 39745)

The inspector reviewed the following to verify that staffing requirements and personnel qualifications and responsibilities specified in Sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center Technical Specifications (TS), Amendment No. 28, dated August 2, 2001, were being met, maintained, and/or fulfilled:

- Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center (RINSC) organizational structure and staffing
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 1, "General Considerations," original version - not yet revised
- staff qualifications and management responsibilities
- staffing requirements for the safe operation of the reactor
- facility annual reports for 2001, 2002, and 2003
- selected portions of the operations logbook for the past year through the present

#### b. Observations and Findings

The RINSC organizational structure had not changed since the last operations inspection in October 2002 (see Inspection Report [IR] No. 50-193/2002-202). The inspector noted that a person had been hired and was in training to fill the position of an individual who had been a qualified Senior Reactor Operator (SRO) at the facility but who had resigned his position. The inspector noted that there were two people with active SRO licenses at RINSC and one individual with an inactive SRO license. Two individuals were in training to become Reactor Operators.

The organizational structure and staffing were as required by TS and as reported in the Annual Report. Qualifications of the staff met TS requirements. The inspector verified, through a review of various records mentioned above, that management and staff responsibilities were administered and fulfilled as required by TS and applicable procedures.

#### c. Conclusions

The organization structure and functions met the requirements specified in TS Section 6.0, entitled "Administrative Controls."



## **2. Review and Audit Functions**

### **a. Inspection Scope (IP 40745)**

In order to verify that the licensee had established and conducted reviews and audits as required in TS Sections 6.1 and 6.4, the inspector reviewed:

- Nuclear and Radiation Safety Full Committee meeting minutes since November 2001 through the present
- Nuclear and Radiation Safety Subcommittee meeting minutes since March 2002 through the present
- safety reviews and audits noted in the committee and subcommittee meetings minutes

### **b. Observations and Findings**

Minutes of the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee (NRSC) since November 2001 through the present showed that the committee met at the required frequency and that a quorum was present. The topics considered during the meetings were consistent with TS requirements to provide direction and oversight, and to ensure acceptable use of the reactor.

A subcommittee (or the full committee) of the NRSC met each quarter and conducted audits and reviews as required; the full NRSC then reviewed the results. Problems or improvement items noted during these audits were discussed and corrective actions were taken as needed.

### **c. Conclusions**

Oversight, review, and audit functions required by TS Sections 6.1 and 6.4 were acceptably completed by the NRSC.

## **3. Procedures**

### **a. Inspection Scope (IP 42745)**

To verify that facility procedures were being reviewed, revised, and implemented as required by TS Section 6.5, the inspector reviewed selected aspects of:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Sections 1-13, and related forms - latest revisions dated March 28, 2003
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendices A-AB, latest revisions dated July 2, 2003
- RINSC Abnormal Procedures, last revised January 9, 1996
- Nuclear and Radiation Safety Full Committee meeting minutes since November 2001 through the present
- procedural compliance and implementation
- associated logs, records, and checklists

b. Observations and Findings

Administrative controls of changes and temporary changes to procedures were as required. The changes were reviewed and approved by the NRSC as required by TS. Training of personnel on procedures and changes was acceptable. Through observation of various activities at the facility, including reactor operation and sample handling, the inspector determined that licensee personnel conducted activities in accordance with applicable procedures. Records showed that procedures for potential malfunctions (e.g., radioactive releases and contaminations, and reactor equipment problems) had been developed and were available to be implemented as required.

c. Conclusions

The procedural review, revision, and implementation program satisfied TS Section 6.5 requirements.

**4. Operations**

a. Inspection Scope (IP 39745)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to ensure that the operations program was being implemented as required in TS Sections 3, 4, and 6:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 7, "Routine Startup," last revised August 17, 1992
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 8, "Operations at Power and Adjustments in Power Level," last revised January 26, 1995, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-11, "Shift Record Data Sheet," Rev 5, dated March 28, 2003, and on RINSC Form NSC-18, "RINSC Reactor Operations Data," Rev 0, dated March 28, 2003
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 9, "Shutdown," last revised October 6, 1999, documented on RINSC Form NSC-1C, "Shutdown Check Sheet," Rev 4, dated March 28, 2003
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix V, "RINSC Pre-Start Checkout," Rev 5, dated March 28, 2003, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1, "Pre-Startup Check Sheet," Rev 1, dated November 20, 2001
- RINSC Operations Log Book No. 51
- Operating Data Notebooks for 2002 and 2003
- staffing for reactor operations
- selected operational, start-up, and shutdown activities on September 9, 2003

b. Observations and Findings

The operating logs and records from July 2002 through the present were reviewed. The inspector determined that the documents provided an indication of operational activities as required by TS and procedures. This included documentation of events and/or problems at the facility and tracking or resolution of the problems. These logs and records also indicated that shift staffing was as required by TS. The records

further showed that operational conditions and parameters were consistent with license and TS requirements. Observation of operational activities in progress during the inspection further confirmed that these conditions and requirements were satisfied.

c. Conclusions

The operations program satisfied Technical Specification requirements.

**5. Design Control**

a. Inspection Scope (IP 40745)

To ensure that the licensee's change and design control program was being implemented as required in 10 CFR 50.59, the inspector reviewed selected aspects of:

- facility design change records documenting replacement of the Start-Up Channel, the Log N Period Channel, and the Log N Power Channel with a new Gamma Metrics Neutron Flux Monitor (from 2002)
- documents indicating facility configuration
- RINSC Annual Report for July 2002 through June 2003

b. Observations and Findings

No changes had been proposed and no 10 CFR 50.59 evaluations had been conducted during 2003 to date. Records of the design change made in 2002 and observations of the steps taken to implement the change showed that the design control program at the facility was being followed. A committee had been formed to evaluate the channel changes and a recommendation had been made to proceed. Subsequently, a 10 CFR 50.59 review and evaluation had been completed as well. The inspector noted that the 2002 design change and other previous changes had been acceptably documented in accordance with 10 CFR 50.59 and applicable licensee requirements. Those changes had been reviewed and approved by the NRSC as required. None of the recent changes constituted a safety question nor required a change to the facility Technical Specifications.

c. Conclusions

The design change program satisfied 10 CFR 50.59 requirements.

**6. Operator Requalification Program**

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69003)

The inspector reviewed selected portions of the following to ensure that the Requalification Program was being acceptably implemented:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix U, "Reactor Operator Re-Qualification," Rev 1, approved July 25, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form

NSC-45, "Operator Requalification Program Checksheet," Rev 1, dated July 25, 2002

- qualified operator licenses and expiration dates
- operator physical examination records
- RINSC Operations Log Book No. 51

b. Observations and Findings

The Requalification Program was outlined in the RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix U. The inspector verified that the latest revision had been submitted to the NRC for review and was approved by NRC letter dated January 16, 2001. Through reviewing requalification checksheets and records, the inspector found that the program was being maintained up-to-date. Operators with active licenses were completing the required activities and reactivity manipulations to maintain their licenses current and their active duty status. These activities also included completing the required training and the required number of hours of SRO functions. Records showed that annual operating tests and biennial written examinations were being completed by the qualified operators as stipulated in the program. Physical examinations were conducted biennially (interval not to exceed 30 months) as allowed in American National Standard ANSI/ANS 15.4-1988, "Selection and Training for Research Reactors," approved June 9, 1988.

c. Conclusions

Operator training and requalification was being conducted in accordance with the RINSC Operator Requalification Program.

## **7. Fuel Movement and Handling**

a. Inspection Scope (IP 60745)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify compliance with TS Sections 3.9 and 4.9:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 2, "Critical Experiments," last revised April 21, 1993
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 3, "Reloading the Core to a Known Configuration," original version - not yet revised
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 5, "Moving and Positioning the Core," original version - not yet revised
- fuel handling equipment and instrumentation
- fuel examination records
- RINSC Operations Log Book No. 51

b. Observations and Findings

Core loading procedures provided a prescribed method to move and handle fuel consistent with the requirements and provisions of the TS Sections 3.9 and 4.9 and

the licensee safety analyses. Fuel movement and fuel examination records showed that the fuel of the current core, Core No. 3, was moved in accordance with procedures and examined annually as required. It was noted that fuel handling tools were controlled and secured by means of a chain and lock when not in use.

A review of the records documenting the various fuel-handling and inspection activities indicated that the most recent Operations Log Book entries were not totally correct. The log entries for three fuel elements did not match the core grid locations for the fuel indicated on the Fuel Status Board in the Control Room. When this was pointed out to the licensee, the licensee verified that the Fuel Status Board was correct and the logbook records were corrected immediately.

c. Conclusions

The fuel handling and examination program satisfied TS and licensee procedural requirements.

**8. Maintenance and Surveillance**

a. Inspection Scope (IP 61745)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify that the licensee's maintenance and surveillance program was being acceptably implemented as required by TS Sections 3 and 4:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 10, "Reactor Facility Emergency Systems Checkout," last revised August 7, 1995
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix A, "Confinement System Semi-Annual Surveillance," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-20, "Confinement System Surveillance," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix D, "Control Rod Parameters," Rev 1, approved March 28, 2003, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-43, "Control Blade Parameter Data Sheet," Rev 0, approved November 20, 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix F, "Inspection of Reactor Pool and Suspension Frame," Rev approved August 24, 1995
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix L, "Procedure for Determining Shutdown Margin (Rod-Drop Method)," Rev 1, approved January 10, 1996
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix W, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Checks," Rev 1, approved December 20, 2002, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1A, "Alarm, Scram, and Interlock Check Sheet," Rev 1, dated July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix X, "Monthly Maintenance," Rev 3, approved March 28, 2003, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-1B, "Monthly Maintenance Check Sheet," Rev 2, dated July 25, 2002
- RINSC Operations Log Books No. 51
- RINSC Core Parameters and Core Component Inspections Notebook

- Periodic Maintenance Notebook containing the documentation of all maintenance scheduled for the facility
- Operating Data Notebooks for 2002 and 2003

b. Observations and Findings

Records were reviewed for the time period from 2002 to date indicated that corrective maintenance activities and problems were addressed as required by the applicable RINSC Operating Procedures and appendices listed above. The records also showed that routine maintenance activities were generally conducted at the required frequency and in accordance with the applicable procedure appendix or equipment manual. Maintenance activities ensured that equipment remained consistent with the Safety Analysis Report and Technical Specification requirements.

Surveillance, test, and limiting conditions for operation (LCO) verifications for selected systems or components were reviewed and found to be completed on schedule and in accordance with the TS and procedures. All the recorded results were within the prescribed parameters. Associated records and logs referenced above were complete and were being maintained as required.

c. Conclusions

The maintenance and surveillance program generally satisfied TS requirements.

**9. Experiments**

a. Inspection Scope (IP 69005)

The inspector reviewed selected aspects of the following to verify that the licensee was in compliance with TS Sections 3.8 and 4.8:

- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 1, "General Considerations," original version - not yet revised
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 8, "Operations at Power and Adjustments in Power Level," last revised January 26, 1995, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-11, "Shift Record Data Sheet," Rev 5, dated March 28, 2003, and on RINSC Form NSC-18, "RINSC Reactor Operations Data," Rev 0, dated March 28, 2003
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 12, "Use of Pneumatic Irradiation Facilities," original version, - not yet revised
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix P, "Incore Irradiation Procedures," last revised October 11, 1995
- RINSC Form NSC-7a, "Neutron Irradiation Request Form - Short Irradiation," last revised September 1994
- RINSC Form NSC-7c, "Pneumatic System Long Irradiation Request Form," last revised September 1994
- RINSC Form NSC-7x, "Neutron Irradiation Request Form - BioPAL 10-15 Minute Irradiations," last revised December 1999 with data documented on RINSC Form "Irradiation Tracking Log for BioPAL Rabbits"
- RINSC Operations Log Book No. 51
- experimental administrative controls and precautions





b. Observations and Findings

The majority of the experiments conducted at the facility were ones that have been in place for several years. However, since the last inspection in this area in October 2002, one new experiment had been proposed (Authorization No. 1121). The experiment involved irradiation of mammalian cells in the reactor's thermal column. The inspector verified that the experiment proposal not only included a discussion of the proposed experiment but the hazards involved and the anticipated results as well. The experiment was reviewed and approved by the Reactor Staff and by the NRSC as required.

The inspector verified that the irradiation request forms for the various operations were completed and approved as required. The inspector also noted that the experiments that had been conducted were completed using approved methods and with the cognizance of the SRO operating the reactor, and a Health Physics representative, in accordance with TS and RINSC Operating Procedure requirements (e.g., reactivity limitations) and Appendix P instructions. The experiments were documented on the appropriate forms noted above and in the operations log as required. Engineering and radiation protection controls were implemented as required to limit exposure to radiation from the irradiated experiment samples.

c. Conclusions

The program for reviewing and conducting experiments satisfied TS and procedural requirements.

## 10. Emergency Preparedness

a. Inspection Scope (IP 82745)

To verify that the licensee was implementing and complying with the RINSC Emergency Plan, Rev 1, dated March 2001, as approved by the NRC, and Section 6.1 of the TS, the inspector reviewed selected aspects of:

- Emergency Plan Implementing Procedures, Rev 2, dated March 2001
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Section 10, "Reactor Facility Emergency Systems Checkout Procedure," last revised August 7, 1995, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-14a, "RINSC Standby Power System Check List," and on RINSC Form NSC-14b, "Evacuation System Check List," last revised March 18, 1996
- RINSC Operating Procedures, Appendix E, "Iodine Efficiency Test," Rev. 0, dated March 28, 2003, with results documented on RINSC Form NSC-19, "Emergency Exhaust System Iodine Filter Efficiency Test," Rev 0, dated March 28, 2003
- emergency response supplies, equipment and instrumentation
- training records for emergency response personnel
- offsite support and support agreements
- synopses and critiques of emergency drills and exercises for 2001 and 2002



b. Observations and Findings

The Emergency Plan (E-Plan) in use at the research reactor was verified to be the same as the version most recently approved by the NRC. The E-Plan was audited and reviewed biennially as required. Implementing procedures were also reviewed and revised biennially to effectively execute the E-Plan. As required by TS Section 6.1, a list of emergency personnel, management, and offsite agencies was posted in the Control Room.

Supplies, instrumentation, and equipment maintained at the facility and at the Emergency Support Center located in the Coastal Institute Building, were being controlled and inventoried as required in the E-Plan. Through drill scenario and records review, emergency responders were determined to be knowledgeable of the proper actions to take in case of an emergency. Agreements with local offsite response organizations had been updated biennially and maintained as necessary. Communications capabilities with these support groups were acceptable and had been tested as required.

Documentation of the drills for the past two years was reviewed. Emergency drills had been conducted annually as required by the E-Plan. Critiques were written following the drills to document the strengths and weaknesses identified during the exercise. Action items were developed to correct the problems identified. Emergency preparedness and response training was being completed typically just prior to the drills.

The inspector noted that the recent drills were conducted as table top exercises. Because of this, the licensee was encouraged to plan and conduct an exercise that would include the active "field" participation of the licensee staff and the various offsite support organizations in response to a simulated emergency. The licensee indicated that this would be considered.

The inspector visited the Narragansett Fire Department's Fire Station No. 3 and observed the supplies and equipment at this support site that would be available in case of an emergency. There appeared to be a good working relationship between the licensee and this support organization.

c. Conclusions

The emergency preparedness program was conducted in accordance with the approved Emergency Plan.

**11. Exit Interview**

The inspection scope and results were summarized on September 11, 2003, with members of licensee management. The inspector described the areas inspected and discussed in detail the inspection findings. No dissenting comments were received from the licensee.

## **PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED**

### Licensee

H. Bicehouse, Radiation Protection Officer and Assistant Director for Reactor Safety  
J. Davis, Reactor Supervisor  
M. Damato, Reactor Operator/Health Physics Technician-in-Training  
D. Johnson, Health Physicist  
B. MacGregor, Facility Engineer  
V. Rose, Chairman, Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission  
W. Simoneau, Assistant Director for Reactor Operations  
T. Tehan, Director, Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center

### Other Personnel

M. Stone, Lieutenant, Narragansett Fire Department, Fire Station No. 3

## **INSPECTION PROCEDURES USED**

IP 39745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Organization, Operations, and Maintenance Activities  
IP 40745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Review and Audit and Design Change Functions  
IP 42745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactor Procedures  
IP 60745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Fuel Handling  
IP 61745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Surveillance  
IP 69003: Class 1 Research and Test Reactor Operator Licenses, Requalification, and Medical Activities  
IP 69005: Class 1 Research and Test Reactors Experiments  
IP 82745: Class 1 Non-Power Reactors Emergency Preparedness

## **ITEMS OPENED, CLOSED, AND DISCUSSED**

### Opened

None

### Closed

None

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS USED**

ADAMS	Agencywide Documents Access and Management System
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
E-Plan	Emergency Plan
IP	Inspection Procedure
IR	Inspection Report
LCO	Limiting Conditions for Operation
MW	Megawatt
No.	Number
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
NRSC	Nuclear and Radiation Safety Committee
NSC	Nuclear Science Center
PAR	Publicly Available Records
Rev.	Revision
RIAEC	Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission
RINSC	Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center
RNRP	New, Research and Test Reactor Program (Branch)
RTR	Research and Test Reactor
SRO	Senior Reactor Operator
TS	Technical Specification