

Statement of Safety Implication: 10CFR 50.55(e)i

Safety Concerns Due to a Potential Defective Weld

The existence of gross amounts of discontinuities in the K-bevel area of the ("T") weld may lead to unacceptable stresses and deformations during the operation of the plant due to abnormal conditions and thus could endanger the structural integrity of the building.

Description of the Deficiency: 10CFR 50.55(e)ii

During a Stone & Webster Audit conducted of the Graver Northeast Facility, questions were raised concerning the adequacy of the Ultrasonic inspection of the T-Joint on the Containment Corner Junction Assemblies. The T-Junctions had been tested earlier using a 45° Ultrasonic scan and accepted by Graver for shipment. Stone & Webster requested that four of the T-Junction welds be retested using a 45° Ultrasonic scan. Three of the four reexaminations revealed indications of interpass cracking of the weld. Graver performed, at Stone & Webster's request, additional retesting, using a 45° and 70° Ultrasonic scan. The retest revealed numerous indications of interpass cracking of the weld. Additional verification test using a 0° Ultrasonic scan from the top of the starter stub plate revealed defects in 45% of the length of the Joints. It was concluded that the 45° Ultrasonic scan originally used by Graver, which was the basis of acceptance of the component, was inadequate to achieve a meaningful Ultrasonic examination of the T-Joint weld as required by the ASME code.

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This deficiency appears to represent a breakdown in the Graver's QA Program in that:

1. It did not properly determine and apply the necessary extent and scope of Ultrasonic examination for the T-Joint weld.
2. It failed to identify the defects and would have allowed the components to be shipped to the field.

Summary

Gulf States Utilities is continuing its investigation of the cause of this deficiency and is reviewing Graver's Quality Assurance Procedures to determine the corrective action necessary to resolve this problem. A follow up report will be provided within 60 days.

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