



Wisconsin Electric POWER COMPANY
231 W. MICHIGAN, P.O. BOX 2046, MILWAUKEE, WI 53201

September 20, 1979

Mr. James G. Keppler, Regional Director
Office of Inspection and Enforcement
Region III
U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
799 Roosevelt Road
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Dear Mr. Keppler:

DOCKET NOS. 50-266 AND 50-301
RESPONSE TO IE BULLETIN 79-18
POINT BEACH NUCLEAR PLANT, UNITS 1 AND 2

IE Bulletin No. 79-18 dated August 7, 1979, discussed audibility problems encountered on evacuation of personnel from high-noise areas. Wisconsin Electric Power Company has always been sensitive to the necessity for audible communication means throughout the Point Beach Nuclear Plant under all conditions. In the early 1970s, an undocumented plant wide survey was conducted to determine the ability of evacuation alarms to be heard in most regularly occupied areas. In the years since 1970, fifteen areas were identified as being deficient in the capability for personnel to hear the public address system. These problem areas were promptly corrected by means of the normal plant modification procedures.

In response to this bulletin, and to provide the necessary documentation, another survey was undertaken to determine whether the evacuation alarms could be heard throughout the plant. The results of this survey and the specific responses to each of the bulletin items are as follows:

1. Determine whether current alarm systems and evacuation announcement systems are clearly audible or visible throughout all plant areas with emphasis on high-noise areas. Determination in high-noise areas must be made with the maximum anticipated noise level.

RESPONSE

An extensive survey was performed throughout the plant. Some cubicles were not checked because the high radiation levels (greater than 20 Rem/hr) would preclude anyone from normally being present. It was clearly impractical to run all combinations of equipment (some of which are safety related) in all areas to determine the maximum anticipated noise levels. In such cases, common sense and good

engineering judgment were used to determine whether the voice public address system (which is used to transmit all fire and evacuation alarms) could be adequately heard and understood.

This survey of the plant indicated twenty-eight locations in which the voice public address system could not be either heard or completely understood. It was also determined that, in general, alarms would be inaudible in the containments during normal operation.

2. Determine what corrective action is necessary to assure that areas identified as inaudible areas in (1) above will receive adequate audible/visual evacuation signals. In areas where adequate audible/visual evacuation alarms cannot be assured by hardware changes, determine what additional administrative measures are necessary to assure personnel evacuation.

RESPONSE

Of the twenty-eight areas mentioned in Item 1, it was found that sixteen of the areas were, in fact, provided with adequately installed audible evacuation alarm speakers, however, the speaker volume had been turned down during previous low background noise periods. A program to assure operability of all public address speakers is underway. The turning down of speaker volume has been a problem during refueling outages when noisy rotating equipment is secured and the background noise level decreases. All plant employees have been reminded that if they turn down the volume on any speakers, control room personnel are to be notified. To further assure continued speaker operability, a survey similar to the one just completed will be conducted on an annual basis. The survey in the turbine hall will be done after each refueling of the respective unit. In addition, plant personnel will be reminded to inform the plant supervisory staff of any alarm audibility problems they observe during the monthly test of the plant's fire and evacuation alarms. In the twelve remaining areas, the plant alarm system and public address speakers were not sufficiently audible. These areas are presently being evaluated as to the expected personnel occupancy and the need for an alarm. If determined to be necessary, additional speakers will be installed in these areas.

As noted previously, it was also observed that, in general, alarms would be inaudible in the containment during normal operation. We do not believe that any hardware modifications are necessary to change this situation. As you know, the containments during operation are very low occupancy areas. Administrative controls presently in force require that personnel entering the containments when the reactor is not in a cold shutdown condition inform the control room operator.

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Personnel must also inform the control room personnel when they leave the containment. At that time, any evacuation action or alarm could be transmitted to those people. A separate containment evacuation alarm is used for refueling operations when the containment is more accessible. This alarm is checked for operability each year.

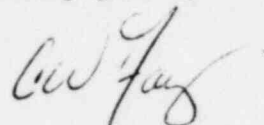
4. For accessible areas, all corrective actions determined per Item (2) must be completed within 120 days of the date of issuance of this bulletin. For inaccessible areas, the written report must include a time schedule for completion of corrective actions in this area.

RESPONSE

All necessary modifications will be accomplished prior to December 5, 1979.

Should you have any question regarding our response to this bulletin, please contact us. A list of the twelve problem areas identified in our alarm survey is available at the plant for review by your inspection personnel.

Very truly yours,



C. W. Fay, Director
Nuclear Power Department

Copy to: Office of Inspection and Enforcement
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