



DOW CHEMICAL U.S.A.

April 28, 1982

MIDLAND, MICHIGAN 48640



James R. Miller, Chief
Standardization and Special Projects
Division of Licensing
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Mr. Miller:

We would like to inform you of an incident which resulted in a minor and momentary violation of the Technical Specifications of the Dow TRIGA. Dr. C. W. Kocher operated the Dow TRIGA research reactor on Wednesday, April 21, 1982 at a power level of 5 watts. While the reactor was at a steady state power level of 5 watts, he instructed another person to disconnect the 10 volt power supply to the compensated ion chamber which is part of the linear channel safety circuit. He then instructed the other person to disconnect the signal lead to the compensated ion chamber. Both leads were reconnected in less than one minute. These actions were taken to test the response of the compensated ion chamber to loss of compensating voltage.

We feel this incident is a violation of our Technical Specifications because we are required to have two linear safety channels operating while the reactor is operating, and for a short period of time we had only one linear safety channel operating. We feel this incident is of minor significance for the following reasons:

1. TRIGA fuel elements are designed to be inherently safe.
2. There is a redundancy in the safety circuitry in that there is an additional linear safety channel (percent power).
3. The signal interruption was momentary, lasting less than one minute.
4. The reactor was operating at a very low power level (5 watts).
5. There were no health or safety hazards associated with the incident.

AN OPERATING UNIT OF THE DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY

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We are taking the following remedial action:

1. C. W. Kocher was indefinitely relieved of his responsibility as Reactor Supervisor by J. M. Macki, effective April 26, 1982. K. J. Kelly will assume this responsibility until Dr. Kocher is reinstated.

2. C. W. Kocher will design and implement a training program which will cover permissible and prohibited activities at the facility with several examples of situations that may be considered border-line. The training program will also reinforce a "reflex" response of operators to report unusual occurrences.

3. A temporary procedure will be instituted which will require approval by the Reactor Supervisor or his designated alternate for any reactor operation except routine checkout procedures which are well documented. This temporary procedure will be reviewed at the next regular Reactor Operations Committee meeting to determine if it should be instituted on a permanent basis.

J. M. Macki

J. M. Macki
Chairman
Reactor Operations Committee

L. W. Rumpy

L. W. Rumpy
Chairman
Radiation Safety Committee

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