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October 18, 1990

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
DOCKETING & SERVICE
BRANCH

TO: DR. R. A. KARAM, DIRECTOR
Neely Nuclear Research Center

FROM: B. K. Revsin *BKR*

SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF BRIAN COPCUTT AS MANAGER, OFFICE OF
RADIATION SAFETY (MORS)

I regret Dr. Copcutt's recent decision to resign his position as MORS at Georgia Tech. While problems with his performance in this role had arisen, I had hoped that with time, they could be adequately resolved. He apparently feels that the differences in operating philosophy are too great to be overcome.

As much as I regret his resignation, I regret even more the manner in which he chose to resign, i. e., a memorandum of allegation and innuendo which is guaranteed to raise questions and concerns in the minds of the Georgia Tech administration as well as Federal and State regulators. It is unfortunate that Dr. Copcutt equates "lack of freedom" with the normal accountability all of us experience in the employer/employee relationship. Exhibiting distress at failure to always have his own way lacks the maturity that is needed in the MORS position, a position which must deal with many types of people.

Dr. Copcutt's suggestion that he was discouraged from documenting regulatory noncompliances is somewhat exaggerated. He was discouraged in the use of the personal memo format for documenting problems. Instead, he was requested to utilize the format that was initiated here at the NNRC several years ago for documenting non-routine occurrences. This latter format is based on the USNRC model for initiating and tracking corrective action in problem areas and has been in use at the NNRC for some time. This format has the advantage of eliciting a complete response to a problem area with little danger of needed actions "slipping through the cracks." Dr. Copcutt indicated that he would not utilize the correct format and that he did not wish to discuss the matter.

As for documenting needed program improvements, it is my personal opinion that once Dr. Copcutt writes a memo to NNRC management stating that some action should be taken, he feels that all responsibility for implementing this action or taking steps to

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Docket No. 50-60-LEN EXHIBIT NO. 15
In the matter of Dr. Revsin
☐ Staff ☐ Applicant ☒ Intervenor ☐ Other
☒ Identified ☒ Received ☐ Rejected Reporter wlw
Date 5/20/96 Witness BC

initiate the improvement was the responsibility of NNRC management rather than himself. This seems unusual in that it was supposed to be his program. He functioned in this manner with the reactor operation at the University of Virginia. He, personally, did not take corrective action, he merely wrote a memo to the reactor director telling him of the problem and expecting the reactor director to fix it. He stated that the practice of using memos in this manner absolved him of further responsibility in the area.

In the four months he has been here, Dr. Copcutt has accomplished very little, choosing to remain sequestered in his office each day with the door shut. Communication has been a very difficult area. There are technicians in the Office of Radiation Safety (ORS) who have direct reporting responsibility to him and to whom he has not said more than "hello." While declining to take an active leadership role in the ORS has been bothersome, of greater concern to myself has been his repeated refusal to take prompt and comprehensive corrective action when radiological events of a non-routine nature occurred. Examples of this are the radioactive contamination found in Emerson A-128 and the contamination discovered in Boggs B-81. Days go by without appropriate and complete corrective action. He declines to inform management of these occurrences and when questioned responds with "I don't know." Although he is responsible first, you and I are ultimately responsible. We cannot ensure that prompt and appropriate corrective action is taken when we cannot get the information.

In summary, although Dr. Copcutt came to Georgia Tech with previous experience, he is not aware of nor does he apparently desire to be sensitized to the regulatory climate surrounding radiological operations at Georgia Tech. An attitude of this nature is unfortunate, but even worse, it has the potential to impact the health and safety of our faculty and staff at Georgia Tech and the general public. Although my opinion may be somewhat biased, I feel that the problem here was not a "lack of freedom," instead, I feel it was more of an instance of failure to use appropriate judgement in the execution of the MORS position.