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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS BRANCH

JUNE 1987

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

This is the inaugural issue of the TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS. These highlights will be issued regularly by the Technical Specifications Branch in an effort to keep both Headquarters and Regional staff informed of important developments in the joint NRC/Industry program to implement the recently issued Commission Policy Statement on Technical Specifications Improvement. Comments or suggestions for future issues should be referred directly to Millard Wohl, Mail Stop 516, telephone extension x27458.

° COMMISSION POLICY STATEMENT ON TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS ISSUED

On February 6, 1987 an Interim Commission Policy Statement on Technical Specification Improvements was published for public comment in the Federal Register. The Policy Statement was made immediately effective. It established a set of three specific objective criteria for defining which types of requirements should be included in technical specifications along with a subjective statement of the general purpose of technical specifications. Industry owners groups were encouraged to initiate programs to rewrite and streamline the existing standard technical specifications (STS), making human factors and other improvements to add clarity and greater ease of use. It is estimated that approximately 40% of the requirements of the existing STS will be transferred from control by technical specifications to control by some other mechanism (e.g. FSAR, operating procedures, QA Plan, etc.). See SECY 86-310 for additional details.

CONTACT: D. C. Fischer, x27465

° STAFF ASSESSMENT REPORT ISSUED ON PHASE 1 OF THE WESTINGHOUSE OWNERS GROUP TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Westinghouse Owners Group (WOG) submitted the results of Phase 1 of their MERITS Program (Methodically Engineered, Restructured, and Improved Technical Specifications) on March 11, 1987. The goal of the WOG MERITS Program is to develop new Standard Technical Specifications (STS) for Westinghouse plants. The submittal included model specifications, including an improved Bases for the new STS, and supporting documentation on changes from the existing STS. The submittal also included the application of the criteria on TS content, as addressed in the Commission Policy Statement on TS Improvements, to a sample of specifications in the current STS. The purpose of the staff review was to assess whether the scope and level of detail provided would be sufficient for the new STS being developed under the MERITS Program. Although a number of generic considerations are yet to

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be finalized through future interaction with the WOG on the new STS, the staff's assessment of the Phase 1 results concluded that it provided an acceptable basis for proceeding with the next phase of the program, that is, to revise the entire STS. The staff assessment report was issued by NRR in a letter to the Chairman of the WOG on May 5, 1987.

CONTACT: T. G. Dunning, x28434

° GENERIC LETTER ISSUED ON SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS

Generic Letter 87-09 was issued on June 4, 1987 to indicate acceptable alternatives to the general requirements in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 of the STS that are applicable to limiting conditions for operation (LCO) and surveillance requirements. The guidance provides changes to TS that may be proposed by licensees and current OL applicants to resolve problems that have been encountered with the existing requirements.

A change to Specification 3.0.4 removes unnecessary restrictions on changes in operational modes or other operating conditions when the ACTION requirements define remedial measures that permit unlimited continued operation. Previously mode changes could not be made when the plant was being operated under the provisions of ACTION requirements.

Changes to Specification 4.0.3 were made to provide up to 24 hours for the completion of a missed surveillance when the allowable outage time limits are less than 24 hours. This change precludes the necessity of a forced shutdown when the allowable outage time limits of the action requirement do not provide sufficient time to complete a missed surveillance. Other changes to this specification clarify that it is applicable when the allowable surveillance interval, as defined by the provisions of Specification 4.0.2, is exceeded and to clarify the time at which the time limits of the action requirements would apply if a surveillance is not completed within the allowable surveillance interval or the 24-hour allowance when it applies.

The changes to Specification 4.0.3 also serve to define a time limit (the 24-hour allowance) for completing surveillance requirements when an exception to the requirements of Specification 4.0.4 is allowed by individual specifications to permit entering a mode where an LCO applies without previously having performed a surveillance within the allowed surveillance interval. An exception to Specification 4.0.4 is typically allowed when a surveillance can only be completed following entry into a mode or other operating condition where the associated LCO applies. The 24-hour allowance also defines a limit for completing a surveillance that may become applicable as a consequence of entering a mode where it applies due to a forced shutdown.

CONTACT: T. G. Dunning, x28434

° REGION IV MANAGEMENT AND RESIDENT INSPECTORS BRIEFED ON COMMISSION POLICY STATEMENT ON TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS AND STAFF ASSESSMENT REPORT ON WOG MERITS PROGRAM REVIEW

A regional meeting of Resident Inspectors (RIs) in Region IV provided the opportunity for the Technical Specifications Branch to brief management and RIs on the objectives of the Commission Policy Statement on TS Improvements and the staff assessment report on Phase 1 of the WOG MERITS Program results. Discussions were held with Region IV management as a pilot program for obtaining regional input and comments on the WOG MERITS Program results. The staff is interested in feedback from the regions for consideration in its subsequent interaction with the WOG on developing the new STS for Westinghouse plants. Based on the results obtained from Region IV, a means for receiving a wider range of regional input will be developed.

CONTACT: T. Dunning, x28434

° REVIEW OF BWR OWNERS GROUP TOPICAL REPORT NEDC-30851P, "TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENT ANALYSES FOR BWR REACTOR PROTECTION SYSTEM"

Based on PRA analyses, the BWR Owners Group proposed via a topical report, that current weekly and monthly RPS sensor channel functional tests be extended to quarterly tests for BWR relay-type RPS plants. It was determined that allowable repair and test times of 1 hour and 2 hours for the BWR RPS relay sensor channels can be extended to 12 hours and 6 hours, respectively.

Idaho Nuclear Engineering Laboratory (INEL) performed the review of this topical report. INEL concluded that the estimated increase in RPS unavailability due to the proposed TS changes would contribute a very small increase to the estimated core-melt frequency. However, if the benefits due to the TS changes are taken into account, such as the reduction in the number of inadvertent test-induced scrams, the net increment in risk resulting from the TS changes would be insignificant. The staff agreed with the INEL findings.

These TS changes constitute a relaxation of a previous staff position, and therefore necessitate a CRGR review. The staff has forwarded the SER and TS changes to CRGR for review.

CONTACT: K. Desai, x27952

° TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS BRANCH (OTSB) ORGANIZATION

The recent NRC reorganization consolidated all of NRR's Technical Specifications functions in a single branch, OTSB with Ed Butcher (x27464) as the Branch Chief. The Branch is divided into two sections - the Special Projects Section (headed by David Fischer, x27465) which is principally responsible for implementing the Commission's Technical Specifications Improvement Program, and the Review and Assessment Section (headed by

Rich Emch, x29601), which is responsible for the development and maintenance of plant-specific Technical Specifications. The branch is further organized into NSSS vendor teams, with members from each section. The purpose of the vendor teams is to maintain a center of expertise within the branch for each vendor STS and to provide an NRC point of contact for each owners' group. The vendor team leaders are:

W	Tom Dunning	x28434
GE	Kulin Desai	x27952
CE	Millard Wohl	x27458
B&W	Sam Bryan	x29929