

ENCLOSURE 2

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV

Docket No.: 50-131

License No.: R-57

Report No.: 50-131/97-01

Licensee: Omaha Veterans Administration Medical Center

Facility: TRIGA Mark I Nuclear Reactor

Location: 4101 Woolworth Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska

Dates: January 24, 1997

Inspector: L. T. Ricketson, P.E., Senior Radiation Specialist
Plant Support Branch

Approved By: Blaine Murray, Chief, Plant Support Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

Attachment: Supplemental Information

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Omaha Veterans Administration Medical Center
NRC Inspection Report 50-131/97-01

This reactive, announced inspection reviewed the reactor operations and operator qualifications.

- The licensee violated NRC requirements governing the operation of the reactor by allowing an individual to operate the reactor after the expiration date of the individual's operator license.
- The operator whose license expired continued to comply with the requirements of the operator requalification program.

Report Details

I. Operations

O1 Conduct of Operations

O1.1 Background

The licensee submitted a request to the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) to terminate the license of one of two senior reactor operators (Operator A). In the process of terminating the license, NRR personnel identified that the license of the second senior reactor operator (Operator B) expired on July 2, 1996. NRR personnel informed Region IV management and a reactive inspection was performed to determine if the TRIGA Mark I reactor was operated by an individual who failed to maintain a current operator's license.

In a letter to the NRC dated January 17, 1997, the licensee committed that the reactor would remain in a secured condition and would not be operated until Operator B's operator license was reinstated.

O1.2 Conduct of Operations (40750)

a. Scope of Inspection

The inspector interviewed Operator B and reviewed the following:

- Reactor logs
- Employee attendance records

b. Observations and Findings

The inspector reviewed reactor logs and determined the reactor was operated 52 times from July 3, 1996, to January 16, 1997. This was approximately 245 hours of reactor operation. The individual who signed the logs and who was at the controls of the reactor was Operator B.

The inspector reviewed employee attendance records and noted that Operator A was also present, for all or part of the reactor operation on 27 of the 52 occasions on which the reactor was operated.

The reactor logs contained no information indicating that operational events impacting on safety occurred July 3, 1996, to January 16, 1997.

10 CFR 55.3 states:

A person must be authorized by a license issued by the Commission to perform the function of an operator or a senior operator as defined in this part,

10 CFR 50.54(i), states:

Except as provided in 10 CFR 50.13, the licensee may not permit the manipulation of the controls of any facility by anyone who is not a licensed operator or senior operator as provided in 10 CFR Part 55.

10 CFR 50.54(k), states:

An operator or senior operator licensed pursuant to 10 CFR Part 55 shall be present at the controls at all times during the operation of the facility.

Operation of the reactor by an individual not authorized by an operator license is a violation of 10 CFR 55.3 and 10 CFR 50.54(k)(50-131/9701-01).

Operator B and licensee management acknowledged this finding. Operator B acknowledged that it was an operator's responsibility to maintain an active license, but added that it had been the belief of both operators that notice of impending license expiration would be sent by the NRC or that the license would automatically be extended, because re-testing of operators by the NRC was no longer conducted.

c. Conclusion

The licensee violated NRC requirements governing the operation of the reactor by allowing an individual to operate the reactor after the expiration date of the individual's operator license.

05 Operator Training and Qualification

a. Inspection Scope (40750)

Documentation of the following items required by the licensee's operator requalification program were reviewed:

- Lectures
- Observations of manipulation of controls and understanding of operations and procedures

- Discussions of facility design, changes, procedures changes, and facility license changes
- Reviews of abnormal emergency procedures
- Annual written examinations

b. Observations and Findings

The licensee's records confirmed that the individual whose operator license had expired was qualified in accordance with the reactor operator qualification program.

c. Conclusion

The operator whose license expired continued to comply with the requirements of the operator requalification program.

O6 Operations Organization and Administration

Operator B was acting as reactor supervisor/manager. Licensee management stated that administrative responsibilities of the new reactor supervisor would be reduced. The reactor supervisor will be involved only in the operation of the reactor and will not have the responsibility for performing administrative functions related to hospital research, as the previous reactor supervisor had. Also, the new reactor supervisor will not serve as radiation safety officer. Another individual was employed as the radiation safety officer. The inspector concluded that these changes complied with the requirements of Technical Specification 6.2 and will allow the new reactor supervisor more time than the previous reactor supervisor to focus on reactor-related issues.

O8 Miscellaneous Operations Issues

Facility License No. R-57 expired on August 1, 1993. The licensee's application for renewal was submitted at least 30 days prior to the expiration date, and the NRC determined the licensee satisfied the requirements of 10 CFR 2.109. Therefore, the existing license will be deemed not to have expired until the request for renewal has been finally determined.

V. Management Meetings

X1 Exit Meeting Summary

The inspector presented the inspection results to the licensee management on January 24, 1997. Licensee management acknowledged the findings presented. The licensee identified no proprietary information.

ATTACHMENT

PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Licensee

J. Claassen, Reactor Manager/Supervisor
J. Phillips, Director, Veterans Affairs Medical Center
L. Klassen, M.D., Associate Chief of Staff

INSPECTION PROCEDURE USED

40750 Class II Research and Test Reactors Operations Procedure

ITEM OPENED

Opened

50-131/9701-01 VIO Reactor was operated by an individual with an expired
license

LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Reactor logs
Employee attendance records
Reactor operator requalification logs