

Hopecreek Nuclear Project  
Hancocks Bridge, NJ-08038.  
10 - 14 - 1985

To: Distribution

Dear Sir,

This is to inform your office about Safety Procedure violations done by the operations group at the Hopecreek Nuclear Plant which have been covered up by firing a few contractor personnel by the management. The procedure in violation was the Safety Tagging Procedure SA-AP-ZZ-015(Q).

The incident happened as follows:

One of the relief valves on the CO2 System tank became defective and so a SDR was written by the startup system engineer, R. Choromanski, directing Bechtel Construction to replace the defective relief valve, PSV-3470B. A red blocking tag was requested by Construction foreman M. Wright to block off PSV-3470B side so that the defective valve could be replaced. The tagging request asked to position the hand lever of the three way isolation valve below to block off the PSV-3470B valve. This request was in accordance with the tagging procedure step 5.4.1.3 which further says that "---- the request should include only the tagging necessary to make the equipment safe for work."

As per the above request, a red blocking tag #038114 was placed on the handle of the isolation valve by the operations group on 9/30/85. This was verified by R. Choromanski and Wright.

On 10/2/85, a construction crew under the supervision of M. Wright removed the relief valve as per the SDR. After they removed the valve, it was noticed that there was another red blocking tag on the relief valve itself with the same tag# 038114.

Later enquiry in to this matter revealed that the operations department was responsible for adding a second tag after changing the tagging request themselves without the knowledge of the originator of the request, M. Wright or startup engineer.

The PSEG management fired all the contractor personnel present at the site of work to cover up the whole incident.

There were serious violations of the Safety procedure SA-AP-22-015(Q) done by the Hopecreek Operations group in the above incident as follows:

1. Changing the tagging request by the operations group is not allowed in the procedure, per sections 4.6, 4.7 & 4.8.
2. Adding a red tag on the relief valve was unnecessary in violation of section 4.4.4 since the tagging request clearly indicated that the work involved nothing but the removal of that relief valve.
3. The supervisor incharge of the work( Wright) was not informed about the addition of a second tag in violation of section 4.6.9.
4. The intent of section 5.1.1.9 is, if there is any confusion about any tagging, Operation shall NOT place any tags till the confusion is resolved with the originators. There is no justification to add any more tags in case there was any confusion about the tagging request.
5. The Operator who added the second tag on the tagging request did not print his name nor sign the tagging request in violation of section 5.1.2.6.
6. The Special Instructions line on the tagging request was not filled as per note 5.1.3.2. This should have been the place for verification signature by the Bechtel Contractor supervisor that the safety tag was properly hung as per his request. This was not verified by the Operations group.
7. The safety tag on the relief valve was NOT hung in a visible location in violation of section 5.2.1. The construction workers, the construction supervisor Wright, the startup engineer R. Choromansky all alike have not seen the red tag on the relief valve prior to the removal of that valve.  
( It may be noted here that the removed valve was put back on 10/3/85 and the tag has been repositioned in a visible location now. Please make an immediate investigation before the records are further tampered with.)

8. In general the Operations group showed their technical ignorance by putting a red blocking tag on a relief valve , which cannot be blocked technically.

We strongly conclude that the Hopecreek Management fired the wrong people. They should have fired the violators in the Operations group who were the only one responsible for the above incident.

It may be noted here that this has happened in the same 17 ton CO2 System which caused a so called malfunction ( another cover up!) while under the supervision of the Operations Group that resulted in the injury of 22 innocent construction workers.

We urge that your responsible office should investigate into this matter and take immediate action in exposing the mismanagement in this plant.

We are unable to disclose our names due to fear of repercussion from the Hopecreek Management.

( A concerned group of  
Construction Engineers at Hopecreek)

Distribution:

1. Nuclear Regulatory Commission-Region 1  
631 Park Ave, King Of Prussia, PA-19406.
2. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office Of Public Affairs, Washington DC-20555.
3. President, New Jersey Board Of Public Utilities  
1100 Raymond Blvd, Newark, NJ-07102.
4. President, Public Service Electric and Gas  
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