



Tennessee Valley Authority, Post Office Box 2000, Decatur, Alabama 35609-2000

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February 2, 2021

10 CFR 50.73  
10 CFR 50.4(a)

ATTN: Document Control Desk  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Unit 1  
Renewed Facility Operating License No. DPR-33  
NRC Docket No. 50-259

Subject: **Licensee Event Report 50-259/2020-003-00 – Main Steam Relief Valves Lift Settings Outside of Technical Specifications Required Setpoints**

The enclosed Licensee Event Report provides details of the inoperability of Main Steam Relief Valves for longer than allowed by plant Technical Specifications. The Tennessee Valley Authority is submitting this report in accordance with Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations 50.73(a)(2)(i)(B), as any operation or condition which was prohibited by the plant's Technical Specifications.

There will be a supplement to this LER to provide additional time to identify the cause and corresponding corrective action(s).

There are no new regulatory commitments contained in this letter. Should you have any questions concerning this submittal, please contact J. L. Paul, Site Licensing Manager, at (256) 729-2636.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Rasmussen", is positioned above the printed name.

Matthew Rasmussen  
Site Vice President

Enclosure: Licensee Event Report 50-259/2020-003-00 – Main Steam Relief Valves Lift Settings Outside of Technical Specifications Required Setpoints

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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February 2, 2021

cc (w/ Enclosure):

NRC Regional Administrator - Region II

NRC Senior Resident Inspector - Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant

NRC Project Manager - Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant

<b>NRC FORM 366</b> (08-2020)		<b>U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION</b>		<b>APPROVED BY OMB: NO. 3150-0104</b>		<b>EXPIRES: 08/31/2023</b>																														
				<b>LICENSEE EVENT REPORT (LER)</b>																																
<b>1. Facility Name</b> Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Unit 1				<b>2. Docket Number</b> 05000259		<b>3. Page</b> 1 OF 8																														
<b>4. Title</b> Main Steam Relief Valves Lift Settings Outside of Technical Specifications Required Setpoints																																				
<b>5. Event Date</b> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width:10%;">Month</th> <th style="width:10%;">Day</th> <th style="width:10%;">Year</th> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>04</td> <td>2020</td> </tr> </table>			Month	Day	Year	12	04	2020	<b>6. LER Number</b> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width:10%;">Year</th> <th style="width:10%;">Sequential Number</th> <th style="width:10%;">Revision No.</th> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>- 003 -</td> <td>00</td> </tr> </table>			Year	Sequential Number	Revision No.	2020	- 003 -	00	<b>7. Report Date</b> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width:10%;">Month</th> <th style="width:10%;">Day</th> <th style="width:10%;">Year</th> </tr> <tr> <td>02</td> <td>02</td> <td>2021</td> </tr> </table>			Month	Day	Year	02	02	2021	<b>8. Other Facilities Involved</b> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width:70%;">Facility Name</th> <th style="width:30%;">Docket Number</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="width:70%;">Facility Name</th> <th style="width:30%;">Docket Number</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>		Facility Name	Docket Number	N/A	N/A	Facility Name	Docket Number	N/A	N/A
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<b>9. Operating Mode</b> 1				<b>10. Power Level</b> 85																																
<b>11. This Report is Submitted Pursuant to the Requirements of 10 CFR §: (Check all that apply)</b>																																				
<b>10 CFR Part 20</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2201(b) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2201(d) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(1) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(2)(i) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(2)(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(2)(iii) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(2)(iv) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(2)(v)		<input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(2)(vi) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(3)(i) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(3)(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> 20.2203(a)(4) <b>10 CFR Part 21</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 21.2(c) <b>10 CFR Part 50</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 50.36(c)(1)(i)(A) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.36(c)(1)(ii)(A)		<input type="checkbox"/> 50.36(c)(2) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.46(a)(3)(ii) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.69(g) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(i)(A) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(i)(B) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(i)(C) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(ii)(A) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(ii)(B) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(iii)		<input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(iv)(A) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(v)(A) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(v)(B) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(v)(C) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(v)(D) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(vii) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(viii)(A) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(viii)(B) <input type="checkbox"/> 50.73(a)(2)(ix)(A)																														
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<input type="checkbox"/> <b>OTHER</b> (Specify here, in abstract, or NRC 366A).																																				
<b>12. Licensee Contact for this LER</b>																																				
<b>Licensee Contact</b> Ryan Coons, Licensing Engineer						<b>Phone Number (Include area code)</b> 256-729-2070																														
<b>13. Complete One Line for each Component Failure Described in this Report</b>																																				
Cause	System	Component	Manufacturer	Reportable to IRIS	Cause	System	Component	Manufacturer	Reportable to IRIS																											
B	SB	RV	T020	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A																											
<b>14. Supplemental Report Expected)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, complete 15. Expected Submission Date)					<b>15. Expected Submission Date</b>			Month	Day	Year																										
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<b>16. Abstract</b> (Limit to 1560 spaces, i.e., approximately 15 single-spaced typewritten lines)  On December 4, 2020, the Tennessee Valley Authority was notified of as-found testing results that four Main Steam Relief Valves (MSRVs) from Unit 1 were outside the +/- 3 percent setpoint band required for operability.  More than the one allowed MSRV was considered to be inoperable during the entire operating cycle and longer than permitted by Technical Specifications. During this time, BFN, Unit 1 entered a Mode of Operation which was not allowed under this condition. The affected valves remained capable of maintaining reactor pressure within American Society of Mechanical Engineers code limits.  It was determined that one MSRV failed due to corrosion bonding between the pilot valve disc and seat, and the other three failed due to setpoint spring relaxation. As a corrective action, all thirteen of the MSRV pilot valves were replaced during the Unit 1 Fall 2020, refueling outage with pilot discs coated in platinum utilizing the Plasma Enhanced Magnetron Sputtering (PEMS) Deposition method. PEMS provides a more consistent and forgiving finish on the pilot valve seating surface and gives the platinum more inherent ductility than what the previous disposition method provided. BFN began using the PEMS method in 2019, so the valves involved in this event did not receive PEMS deposited platinum coatings during their last rebuild. The PEMS method was used for the pilot discs of the rebuilt valves installed during the Unit 1 Fall 2020 refueling outage, and will be used for all pilot discs going forward. Additional time is needed to identify the cause and corresponding corrective action(s) for spring relaxation which will be included in the planned supplement.																																				

**LICENSEE EVENT REPORT (LER)  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Estimated burden per response to comply with this mandatory collection request: 80 hours. Reported lessons learned are incorporated into the licensing process and fed back to industry. Send comments regarding burden estimate to the FOIA, Library, and Information Collections Branch (T-6 A10M), U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to [Infocollects.Resource@nrc.gov](mailto:Infocollects.Resource@nrc.gov), and the OMB reviewer at: OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, (3150-0104), Attn: Desk Officer for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503; e-mail: [oir\\_submission@omb.eop.gov](mailto:oir_submission@omb.eop.gov). The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the document requesting or requiring the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

1. FACILITY NAME	2. DOCKET NUMBER	3. LER NUMBER		
		YEAR	SEQUENTIAL NUMBER	REV NO.
Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, Unit 1	05000-259	2020	- 003	- 00

**NARRATIVE****I. Plant Operating Conditions Before the Event**

At the time of discovery, Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant (BFN) Unit 1 was in Mode 1 at approximately 85 percent power.

**II. Description of Event****A. Event Summary**

On December 4, 2020, NWS Technologies notified the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) with the as-found testing results of the thirteen Main Steam Relief Valves (MSRVs) [RV], which were removed during the Fall 2020 Unit 1 Refueling Outage 13 (U1R13). Four MSRVs (BFN-1-PCV-001-0004, BFN-1-PCV-001-0019, BFN-1-PCV-001-0022, and BFN-1-PCV-001-0041) had as-found lift settings which were outside of the +/- 3 percent band of their setpoints required for operability.

Technical Specification (TS) 3.4.3, Safety/Relief Valves (S/RVs), requires twelve of the thirteen S/RVs to be operable for S/RV system [SB] operability. The four MSRVs were found to have been inoperable for an indeterminate period of time during the entire operating cycle between November 20, 2018, and October 3, 2020, and longer than permitted by TS 3.4.3.

Throughout this event, the two-stage MSRV pilot valves remained capable of maintaining the reactor pressure below 1375 pounds per square inch gauge (psig), which is the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) code limit of 110 percent of the vessel design pressure. The valves remained capable of performing their required safety function.

The TVA is submitting this report in accordance with Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations 50.73(a)(2)(i)(B), as any operation or condition which was prohibited by the plant's TS.

**B. Status of structures, components, or systems that were inoperable at the start of the event and that contributed to the event**

There were no structures, systems, or components (SSCs) whose inoperability contributed to this event.

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**NARRATIVE****C. Dates and approximate times of occurrences**

<u>Dates and Approximate Times</u>	<u>Occurrence</u>
November 20, 2018	Unit 1 entered Mode 2, beginning Fuel Cycle 13 (U1C13)
July 21, 2020	U1 inserted a manual scram in response to degrading main condenser vacuum due to marine biofouling at the intake structure.
July 29, 2020	U1 enters Mode 2 during restart following the scram.
October 3, 2020	Unit 1 entered Mode 4 for U1R13.
December 4, 2020	NWS Technologies notified the TVA with as-found testing results of the thirteen Unit 1 MSRV pilot valves removed during U1R13.

**D. Manufacturer and model number of each component that failed during the event**

The failed components were all Target Rock Corporation two-stage pressure control valves, model number 7567F.

**E. Other systems or secondary functions affected**

No other systems or secondary functions were affected.

**F. Method of discovery of each component or system failure or procedural error**

The MSRV failures were discovered at NWS Technologies during their as-found testing of the thirteen MSRV two-stage pilot valves which were removed during U1R13.

**G. The failure mode, mechanism, and effect of each failed component**

MSRV BFN-1-PCV-001-0041 failed due to corrosion bonding to the valve seats. Two additional test lifts on the valve were within the acceptance criteria of +/- 3 percent of the required setpoint, indicating corrosion bonding caused each pilot valve to initially lift high.

MSRVs BFN-1-PCV-001-0004, BFN-1-PCV-001-0019, BFN-1-PCV-001-0022 failed due to a relaxation of the setpoint spring over time.

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**NARRATIVE****H. Operator actions**

There were no operator actions associated with this event.

**I. Automatically and manually initiated safety system responses**

There were no automatic or manual safety system responses associated with this event.

**III. Cause of the event****A. Cause of each component or system failure or personnel error**

MSRV BFN-1-PCV-001-0041 failed above its setpoint band due to valve disc corrosion bonding to the valve seat.

MSRVs BFN-1-PCV-001-0004, BFN-1-PCV-001-0019, and BFN-1-PCV-001-0022 failed below their setpoints due to relaxed setpoint springs. Additional time is needed to identify the cause for this spring relaxation, which will be included in the planned supplement.

**B. Cause(s) and circumstances for each human performance related root cause**

No human performance related root causes were identified.

**IV. Analysis of the event**

BFN, Unit 1 TS Limiting Condition for Operation (LCO) 3.4.3 requires twelve Operable S/RVs during Modes 1, 2, and 3. If one or more required S/RVs become inoperable, Required Action A.1 requires entering Mode 3 within 12 hours and Required Action A.2 requires entering Mode 4 within 36 hours. S/RV Operability requires that S/RVs be within a +/- 3 percent band of their setpoint values in accordance with Surveillance Requirement (SR) 3.4.3.1. BFN Unit 1 has thirteen MSRVs to satisfy this requirement with margin.

When tested, the following four S/RVs were outside the allowable +/- 3 percent band.

<u>S/RV ID Number</u>	<u>Setpoint (psig)</u>	<u>Test Result (psig)</u>	<u>Difference ( Percent)</u>
BFN-1-PCV-001-0004	1155	1109	- 4.0
BFN-1-PCV-001-0019	1135	1099	- 3.2
BFN-1-PCV-001-0022	1145	1096	- 4.3
BFN-1-PCV-001-0041	1155	1248	+ 8.1

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**NARRATIVE**

Prior to startup from U1R13, all thirteen MSRV pilot valves were replaced with refurbished valves which were certified to lift within +/- 1 percent of their setpoint. Operating Experience has shown that Target Rock two-stage MSRV setpoint drift is not a uniform, linear process. The corrosion bonding increases at a random rate. Without an accurate and reliable model for predicting or estimating the setpoint drift development, the point in time where the setpoint exceeded the +/- 3 percent limit cannot be reliably determined. Since this drift occurred during the operating cycle when the MSRVs were installed, MSRVs BFN-1-PCV-001-0004, BFN-1-PCV-001-0019, BFN-1-PCV-001-0022, and BFN-1-PCV-001-0041 are conservatively considered to be inoperable for an indeterminate period of time between November 20, 2018, and October 3, 2020. More than one MSRV was considered to be inoperable during the entire operating cycle and longer than permitted by TS 3.4.3.

TS LCO 3.0.4 states that when an LCO is not met, entry into a Mode or other specified condition in the Applicability shall only be made when the associated ACTIONS to be entered permit continued operation in the MODE or other specified condition in the Applicability for an unlimited period of time. On July 29, 2020, during the restart from an unrelated manual scram in response to a biofouling-induced degradation of the main condenser vacuum, BFN, Unit 1 entered a TS 3.4.3 Applicable Mode when LCO TS 3.4.3 Required Actions were not met. Therefore, Unit 1 was in violation of TS 3.0.4.

**V. Assessment of Safety Consequences**

System availability was not impacted by this event. The failure of the MSRV pilot valves to meet their TS 3.4.3 specified mechanical setpoints did not impact their remote-manual operation or activation through the MSRV Automatic Actuation Logic, since these operating modes and functions rely upon electrically signaled control air solenoids to open the MSRV pilot valves.

If an S/RV were to open at a pressure value below that assumed in the analyses of record, it would allow the pressure vessel to depressurize quicker, thus leading to a reduced peak calculated pressure. For the three S/RV's found to have tested to an earlier (lower) lift point, there would be no increased peak pressure calculated. Hence, these three valves test results do not impact (are bounded by) the analyses of record.

For the single S/RV to have opened at a higher pressure value than assumed in the analysis of record, it could in theory increase the peak pressure experienced in the event. However, both the ASME and ATWS overpressure analyses assume one S/RV out-of-service (in the lowest setpoint group to be conservative). Since only one S/RV was determined to fail high, the valve can be assigned as the out-of-service valve in the analyses of record. Consequently, there is no impact to the peak calculated pressure for the ASME and ATWS overpressure events at any time during U1C13 operation.



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**NARRATIVE**

TS Bases 3.4.3 states that the overpressure protection system must accommodate the most severe pressurization transient. The MSRVs remained capable of maintaining the reactor pressure below 1375 psig, which is the ASME code limit (110 percent of the vessel design pressure). The valves remained capable of performing their required safety function.

Based on the above, the TVA has concluded that sufficient systems were available to provide the required safety functions needed to protect the health and safety of the public.

**A. Availability of systems or components that could have performed the same function as the components and systems that failed during the event**

Each BFN operating unit has a non-safety related, electrical logic system (MSRV Actuation Logic) installed, which provides defense-in-depth against MSRV setpoint drift by electrically opening MSRV groups based upon setpoints at 1135 psig, 1145 psig, and 1155 psig. Therefore, during a reactor pressure transient event, the four 1135 psig group MSRVs, followed by the four 1145 psig group MSRVs, and finally the five 1155 psig group MSRVs would receive an electrical open signal, providing a defense-in-depth function to allow the valves to perform their safety function.

**B. For events that occurred when the reactor was shut down, availability of systems or components needed to shutdown the reactor and maintain safe shutdown conditions, remove residual heat, control the release of radioactive material, or mitigate the consequences of an accident**

This event did not occur when the reactor was shutdown.

**C. For failure that rendered a train of a safety system inoperable, estimate of the elapsed time from discovery of the failure until the train was returned to service**

TS 3.4.3 require twelve of the thirteen S/RVs to be operable for S/RV system operability. It is conservatively assumed that less than twelve S/RVs were operable for the duration of the fuel cycle, from November 20, 2018, and October 3, 2020.

**VI. Corrective Actions**

Corrective Actions are being managed by the TVA's corrective action program under Condition Reports (CRs) 962223, 1286467, 1410577, 1521190, and 1606785, and 1658693.



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**NARRATIVE****A. Immediate Corrective Actions**

All thirteen of the BFN, Unit 1 MSRV pilot valves were replaced with refurbished valves during U1R13. As-left testing verified that these refurbished pilot valves were within +/- 1 percent of their setpoints.

**B. Corrective Actions to Prevent Recurrence or to reduce the probability of similar events occurring in the future**

As most recently discussed in LER 50-296/2020-002-00, a flaking issue has been noted with the platinum coated pilot discs. The Boiling Water Reactor Owners' Group (BWROG) is currently working toward a solution to improve the quality and adhesion of the platinum coating on the discs. These improvements include changing the method of applying the platinum to the pilot discs from Ion Beam Assisted Deposition (IBAD) to Plasma Enhanced Magnetron Sputtering (PEMS) Deposition, which data shows provides a more consistent and forgiving finish on the pilot valve seating surface and gives the platinum more inherent ductility. Use of the PEMS method began in 2019, so the valves involved did not receive PEMS deposited platinum coatings during their rebuilds. The PEMS method was used for the pilot discs of the rebuilt valves installed during the U1R13 refueling outage, and will be used for all pilot discs going forward.

Additional time is needed to identify the corrective action(s) for spring relaxation which will be included in the planned supplement.

**VII. Previous Similar Events at the Same Site**

A search of BFN Units 1, 2, and 3 LERs for the last five years identified seven LERs associated with MSRV lift settings outside of TS required setpoints:

- LER 50-296/2020-002-00, for Unit 3 Cycle 19
- LER 50-260/2019-002-00, for Unit 2 Cycle 20
- LER 50-259/2018-007-00, for Unit 1 Cycle 12
- LER 50-296/2018-004-00, for Unit 3 Cycle 18
- LER 50-260/2017-004-00, for Unit 2 Cycle 19
- LER 50-259/2016-005-00, for Unit 1 Cycle 11
- LER 50-296/2016-004-00, for Unit 3 Cycle 17

**VIII. Additional Information**

There is no additional information.



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## NARRATIVE

### IX. Commitments

There are no new commitments.