

common defense and security, and are otherwise in the public interest.

Currently, unescorted access into the protected area of DBNPS for both employee and contractor personnel is controlled through the use of picture badges. Positive identification of personnel who are authorized and request access into the protected area is established by security personnel making a visual comparison of the individual requesting access and that individual's picture badge. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor personnel are not allowed to take their picture badges offsite. In accordance with the plant's physical security plan, the licensee's employees are also not allowed to take their picture badges offsite.

The proposed system will require that all individuals with authorized unescorted access have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their picture badge number in a computerized access control system. Therefore, all authorized individuals must not only have their picture badge to gain access to the protected area, they must also have their hand geometry confirmed. All individuals, including contractors, who have authorized unescorted access into the protected area will be allowed to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing DBNPS.

All other access processes, including search function capability and access revocation, will remain the same. A security officer responsible for access control will continue to be positioned within a bullet-resistant structure. It should also be noted that the proposed system is only for individuals with authorized unescorted access and will not be used for those individuals requiring escorts.

Sandia National Laboratories conducted testing which demonstrated that the hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance characteristics. Details of the testing performed are in the Sandia report, "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91-0276 UC-906, Unlimited Release, June 1991. On the basis of the Sandia report and the licensee's experience using the current photo picture identification system, the false acceptance rate for the proposed hand geometry system would be at least equivalent to that of the current system. To ensure that the proposed system will continue to meet the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, the licensee will implement a process for testing the system. The site security plans will also be revised to allow implementation of

the hand geometry system and to allow employees and contractors with unescorted access to keep their picture badges in their possession when leaving DBNPS.

IV

For the foregoing reasons, the NRC staff has determined that the proposed alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage meet the high assurance objective and the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55. In addition, the staff has determined that the overall level of the proposed system's performance will provide protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which is provided by the current system in accordance with 10 CFR 73.55.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 73.5, this exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the following exemption:

The requirement of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) that individuals who have been granted unescorted access and are not employed by the licensee are to return their picture badges upon exit from the protected area is no longer necessary. Thus, these individuals may keep their picture badges in their possession upon leaving Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station. This exemption is granted on the condition that the licensee implements a system testing process and revises the site security plan as discussed in Section III above.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact (62 FR 30627).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 10th day of July 1997.

For The Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Collins,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 97-18830 Filed 7-16-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 50-397]

Washington Public Power Supply System; Notice of Partial Withdrawal of Application for Amendment to Facility Operating License

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) has granted the request of Washington Public Power Supply System (the

licensee) to partially withdraw its May 20, 1997, application, as supplemented by letters dated June 6, 1997, and July 3, 1997, for proposed amendment to Facility Operating License NPF-21 for the Washington Nuclear Project No. 2, located in Benton County, Washington.

The proposed change modifies the Technical Specifications (TS) for the minimum critical power ratio (MCPR) safety limit in TS 2.1.1.2 for ATRIUM 9X9 fuel. In addition, a new reference would have been added to TS Section 5.6.5, "Core Operating Limits Report." The licensee's June 6, 1997, letter, in addition to specifying that the proposed license amendment change would only be in effect for Cycle 13, withdrew the addition of this new reference.

The Commission had previously issued a Notice of Consideration of Issuance of Amendment published in the **Federal Register** on May 29, 1997 (62 FR 29160). However, by letter dated June 6, 1997, the licensee partially withdrew the proposed change.

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated May 20, 1997, as supplemented by letters dated June 6, 1997, which partially withdrew the application for license amendment, and July 3, 1997. The above documents are available for public inspection at the Commission's Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Street, Richland, Washington 99352.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 3rd day of July 1997.

For The Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Timothy G. Colburn,

Senior Project Manager, Project Directorate IV-2, Division of Reactor Projects-III/IV, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 97-18828 Filed 7-16-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-P

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards Subcommittee Meeting on Thermal Hydraulic Phenomena; Notice of Meeting

The ACRS Subcommittee on Thermal Hydraulic Phenomena will hold a meeting on July 29-30, 1997, Room T-2B3, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland.

Most of the meeting will be closed to public attendance to discuss Westinghouse Electric Corporation proprietary information pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(4).