

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket Nos. 50-280 and 50-281]

Virginia Electric and Power Company Surry Nuclear Power Station; Exemption

I

The Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO, the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR-32 and Facility Operating License No. DPR-37, which authorize operation of the Surry Nuclear Power Station, Units 1 and 2. The licenses provide that the licensee is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

The facility consists of two pressurized-water reactors at the licensee's site located in Surry County, Virginia.

II

The Code of Federal Regulations at 10 CFR 70.24, "Criticality Accident Requirements," requires that each licensee authorized to possess special nuclear material shall maintain a criticality accident monitoring system in each area in which such material is handled, used, or stored. Sections 70.24(a)(1) and (a)(2) specify detection and sensitivity requirements that these monitors must meet. Section 70.24(a)(1) also specifies that all areas subject to criticality accident monitoring must be covered by two detectors. Section 70.24(a)(3) requires licensees to maintain emergency procedures for each area in which this licensed special nuclear material is handled, used, or stored, and provides (1) that the procedures ensure that all personnel withdraw to an area of safety upon the sounding of a criticality accident monitor alarm, (2) that the procedures must include drills to familiarize personnel with the evacuation plan, and (3) that the procedures designate responsible individuals for determining the cause of the alarm and placement of radiation survey instruments in accessible locations for use in such an emergency. Section 70.24(b)(1) requires licensees to have a means by which to quickly identify personnel who have received a dose of 10 rads or more. Section 70.24(b)(2) requires licensees to maintain personnel decontamination facilities, to maintain arrangements for a physician and other medical personnel qualified to handle radiation emergencies, and to maintain arrangements for the transportation of contaminated individuals to treatment

facilities outside the site boundary. Section 70.24(c) exempts Part 50 licensees from the requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(c) for special nuclear material used or to be used in the reactor. Subsection 70.24(d) states that any licensee who believes that there is good cause why he should be granted an exemption from all or part of 10 CFR 70.24 may apply to the Commission for such an exemption and shall specify the reasons for the relief requested.

III

By letter dated January 27, 1997, as supplemented March 24, 1997, VEPCO requested an exemption from 10 CFR 70.24(a). The Commission has reviewed the licensee's submittal and has determined that inadvertent criticality is not likely to occur in special nuclear materials handling or storage areas at Surry Nuclear Station, Units 1 and 2. The quantity of special nuclear material other than fuel that is stored on site is small enough to preclude achieving a critical mass.

The purpose of the criticality monitors required by 10 CFR 70.24 is to ensure that if a criticality were to occur during the handling of special nuclear material, personnel would be alerted to that fact and would take appropriate action. Although the staff has determined that such an accident is not likely to occur, the licensee has radiation monitors, as required by General Design Criteria 63, in fuel storage and handling areas. These monitors will alert personnel to excessive radiation levels and allow them to initiate appropriate safety actions. The low probability of an inadvertent criticality together with the licensee's adherence to General Design Criterion 63 constitute good cause for granting an exemption to the requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(a).

IV

The Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 70.14, this exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest; therefore, the Commission hereby grants the following exemption:

The Virginia Electric and Power Company is exempt from the requirements of 10 CFR 70.24(a) for the Surry Nuclear Power Station, Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment (62 FR 44495).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of August 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Samuel J. Collins,

Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Biweekly Notice

Applications and Amendments to Facility Operating Licenses Involving No Significant Hazards Considerations

I. Background

Pursuant to Public Law 97-415, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission or NRC staff) is publishing this regular biweekly notice. Public Law 97-415 revised section 189 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act), to require the Commission to publish notice of any amendments issued, or proposed to be issued, under a new provision of section 189 of the Act. This provision grants the Commission the authority to issue and make immediately effective any amendment to an operating license upon a determination by the Commission that such amendment involves no significant hazards consideration, notwithstanding the pendency before the Commission of a request for a hearing from any person.

This biweekly notice includes all notices of amendments issued, or proposed to be issued from August 4, 1997, through August 15, 1997. The last biweekly notice was published on August 13, 1997 (62 FR 43365).

Notice Of Consideration Of Issuance Of Amendments To Facility Operating Licenses, Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination, And Opportunity For A Hearing

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the following amendment requests involve no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a