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US NRC

Tennessee Valley Authority, 1101 Market Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402-2801

January 7, 2000

Rules and Directives Branch
Office of Administration
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Gentlemen:

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (NRC) - DRAFT REGULATORY GUIDE
DG-1082 - MAINTENANCE RULE (*Volume 64 Federal Register 70098*)

TVA is pleased to provide the enclosed comments related to the subject draft regulatory guide titled "Assessing and Managing Risk Before Maintenance Activities at Nuclear Power Plants." These comments are in response to the NRC's request published in the *Federal Register* on December 15, 1999 in Vol. 64, No. 240, p. 70098.

If you have any questions, please contact Rob Brown at (423) 751-7228.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Burzynski
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Enclosure

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Enclosure

Comments on DG-1082 titled "Assessing and Managing Risk Before Maintenance Activities at Nuclear Power Plants."

- The NUMARC 93-01 draft document indicates quantitative assessments of the increase in the frequency of a risk-significant event. The problem with this is there is no definition (or reference to another document which provides guidance) for a "risk significant initiating event." In addition, it is TVA's understanding that the Commission wishes for the industry to use current acceptable practices for managing risk. Tools to assess the quantitative frequency of initiating events are not commonly in use. Since the wording "by an order of magnitude" implies quantification, this would drive utilities to develop tools at great cost but little gain to manage risk.

Paragraph 11.3.2.2 currently states the following:

The assessment method may use quantitative approaches, qualitative approaches, or blended methods. In general, the assessment should consider:

The fifth bullet now states:

The likelihood that the maintenance activity will significantly increase the frequency of a risk-significant initiating event (e.g., by an order of magnitude or more)

The proposed wording is:

Significant increases of a risk-significant initiating event which may be qualitatively or quantitatively defined.

- Paragraph 10.3.2.2, seventh bullet, indicates that the risk assessments should consider significant performance issues for the in-service redundant SSCs. This guidance is redundant to Generic Letter 91-18 which requires evaluations for nonconforming and degraded SSCs (especially those which are degraded). The Commission should ensure that there is not overlap between the regulatory guidance for these regulations. The relationship to 10 CFR 50.59 should also be clearly defined to prevent redundancy.
- The 120-day time period is too short to allow utilities to implement the rule effectively. This is the first rule to have a risk-informed approach taken to it. It is in the best interests of the Commission and the utilities to take enough time to implement this rule correctly since it will set precedent for other risk-informed regulation implementation.

- A word is missing from the second paragraph of section 11.3.6. Proposed wording should be:

Performance of the safety assessment for shutdown conditions generally involves a qualitative assessment with regard to key safety functions, and follows the same general process described in Section 11.3.4.2 above. (Those plants that have performed shutdown PSAs can use these PSAs as an input to their shutdown assessment methods.) However, some considerations from those differ from those associated with the at-power assessment. These include: (Add the word "differ.")

- Appendix B needs clarification with respect to the details concerning the definition of unavailability. In this paragraph, the term "required operational hours" needs clarification. A proposal is provided to define required operational hours during shutdown periods as follows:

Required operational hours for shutdown functions are those required by the site outage risk management program. If the plant has the number of required trains equivalent to the low risk profile as defined in the outage risk program or Technical Specifications, reliability and unavailability are considered to be balanced, since the goal of balancing is to ensure random failures are minimized while optimizing unavailability commensurate with risk.

- Appendix B is too restrictive regarding surveillance testing. The guidance continues to only allow one operator and one action, which is unrealistic. The guidance should allow one operator locally and an operator in the control room under the guidance given (uncomplicated, no diagnosis or repair, etc.) In addition, the quantification of successful restoration (probability nearly equal to 1) is unrealistic. Again, if the actions meet the other criteria, their success is very reliable, but "nearly equal to 1" is too subjective. If the actions meet the guidelines, they should be allowed. Proposed wording is as follows:

SSCs out of service for surveillance testing are considered unavailable, unless the test configuration is automatically overridden by a valid starting signal, or the function can be restored by an operator in the control room and/or by a dedicated operator stationed locally for that purpose. Restoration actions must be contained in a written procedure, must be uncomplicated, and must not require diagnosis or repair. Credit for a dedicated local operator can be taken only if the operator is positioned at the proper location throughout the duration of the test for the purpose of restoration of the train should a valid demand occur. The intent of this paragraph is to allow licensees to take credit for restoration actions that are virtually certain to be successful.