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CRITICALITY SAFETY EVALUATION FOR DISSASSEMBLY BASIN SAND FILTER (U)

by

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DOE Contract No. **DE-AC09-89SR18035**

WSRC-TR-93-614
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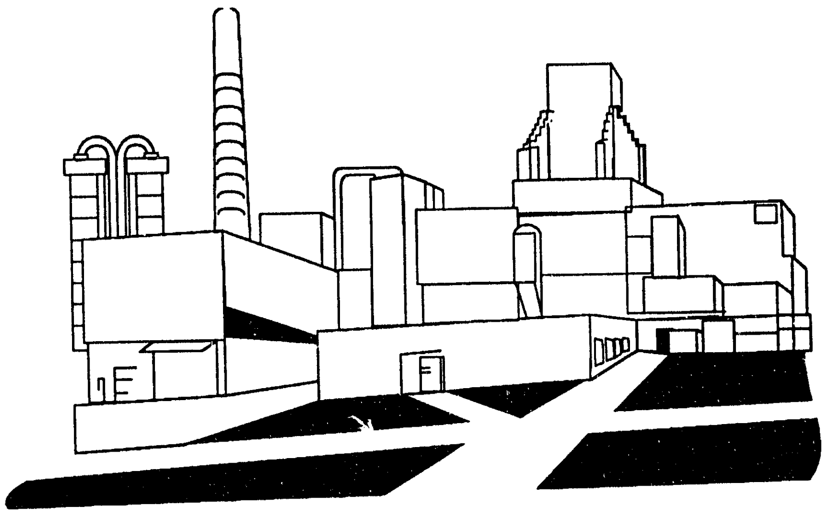

TECHNICAL REPORT

CRITICALITY SAFETY EVALUATION FOR DISASSEMBLY BASIN SAND FILTER(U)

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NAME AND TITLE DATE

KEYWORDS:
TECHNICAL
REACTORS
CRITICALITY
DISASSEMBLY

RETENTION:
PERMANENT

CRITICALITY SAFETY EVALUATION FOR DISASSEMBLY BASIN SAND FILTER (U)

BY

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ISSUED: MAY, 1994

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CRITICALITY SAFETY EVALUATION FOR DISASSEMBLY BASIN SAND FILTER (U)

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the Reactor Division's disassembly basin cleanup program, it has been determined that fissile isotopes are present in the sludge that has accumulated at the bottom of the disassembly basins (References 1 through 5). Good criticality safety practices require that the potential for obtaining a critical configuration with this fissile material be evaluated. As part of this process, the disassembly basin sand filter system has been identified as a potential area of concern. Because disassembly basin water flows through the sand filter, it is conceivable that fissile material, from the basin, could accumulate in the sand filter. As is documented in Reference 13, and shown in Table 1 of this document, previous calculations have indicated that the mass of some fissile isotopes in the basin sludge exceeds subcritical mass limits. This report documents the criticality safety evaluation that was performed to address the possibility of forming a critical configuration within the sand filter. This evaluation is applicable to K and L Areas, since the fissile masses listed in Table 1 are bounding for both areas. Applicability to P Area will be examined following the completion of sludge sample analyses for that Area.

SUMMARY

Although it is conceivable that fissile material could accumulate in the sand filter, because of the required fissile mass and necessary critical geometries it is highly unlikely that a critical configuration could be assembled. The mass of fissile material required for criticality, for present and anticipated sand filter geometries and operational characteristics, is much greater than that available in the sludge, as indicated by sludge sample analyses. In short, there is no identified mechanism by which a critical configuration could be assembled in the disassembly basin sand filter.

DISCUSSION

Description - Sand Filter Operation

The sand filter is an 11 foot diameter tank containing a sand-anthracite filter medium (References 6, 7 and 12). The filter consists of an 18" layer of anthracite on top of an 18" layer of sand (Reference 12). Water from the disassembly basin is circulated through the sand filter to remove suspended particulates and maintain the clarity of the water. Water is removed from and returned to the basin at various locations.

The design and nature of the sand filter is such that water comes into the sand filter from above and hits a 2.5' square plate that distributes the water over the entire surface of the sand mixture. This serves to uniformly distribute any particulates in the water and, thus, should eliminate, or at least reduce, the potential for localized accumulations of basin particulates. The flow of basin water to the sand filter is approximately 715 gpm (Reference 12). The sand filter is backwashed to a settler tank per management direction, or when the pressure drop across it becomes excessive. According to DPSOL 105-3723A, a sand filter is normally backwashed each day. However, discussions with technical support personnel have indicated that the present frequency is approximately once per week (References 14, 15 and 16).

It is expected that a new type of sand filter will be put into service in the near future. This new sand filter will differ from the present sand filter in that it has a diameter of 6', instead of 11', and it will have a reduced flow, because the new version puts several sand filters in parallel. Otherwise, the new sand filter will be similar to the present sand filter. This evaluation is applicable to the smaller sand filter.

Description - Fissile Isotope Mass in the Basin Sludge

References 4 and 5 discuss the basin sludge cleanup process in detail. The best estimate and conservative fissile mass values for the sludge are provided in Table 1. The conservative mass estimates were obtained by adding isotope measurement uncertainties and sludge volume uncertainties to the best estimate masses. The mass values given in Table 1 are bounding for K and L Areas. The applicability to P Area will be evaluated when P Area sludge sample analyses become available.

Requirements Documentation

In addition to the general requirements documentation that is applicable to all criticality safety evaluations (Reference 11), ANS-8.15, "American National Standard for Nuclear Criticality Control of Special Actinide Elements", is applicable to this evaluation. Sludge analyses indicate the presence of several special actinide elements (References 1 through 5).

Methodology

For this evaluation, analytical (i.e. - hand) calculations that made use of national standard subcritical limits were performed to estimate the mass of fissile material (in this case U-235) required to achieve criticality in the sand filter. This was done by calculating, for a given sand filter radius, the mass of U-235 required to reach the areal density subcritical limit for aqueous U-

235 mixtures. The areal density limit (see Table 1) was used in this evaluation because it is most applicable to the assumed sand filter configuration (i.e. - an aqueous layer, of varying thickness, containing fissile material). The calculated U-235 mass, since it corresponds to a subcritical limit, will still produce a subcritical configuration, but it provides a good lower estimate of the mass required for an actual critical configuration. The details of these analytical calculations are provided in Calculation # N-CLC-K-00151 (Reference 13).

In order to provide independent support for the above analytical work and to allow a more detailed treatment of the sand filter arrangement, supplemental calculations were performed using the KENO5A-PC criticality safety computer code (Reference 9). To do this, the sand filter was modeled as a cylinder containing four distinct layers of material:

1. 12" water layer
2. 18" anthracite layer
3. 18" sand layer
4. 12" water layer

The fissile material in the sand filter was assumed to have settled in the anthracite and sand layers to varying depths. The fissile mass used in these calculations is that corresponding to the fissile isotopes in the K disassembly basin sludge. Where explicit modeling of isotopes was not possible, an equivalent U-235 mass was used. The actual fissile isotope masses used in the KENO5A-PC calculations are given in Table 1. Calculations were performed for various cylinder radii and various depths of fissile isotope penetration into the filter medium. The details of these KENO5A-PC calculations are also contained in Calculation # N-CLC-K-00151 (Reference 13). It should be noted that the KENO5A-PC code is not a SRS-certified criticality safety code, but it is adequate for scoping calculations. It is for this reason that the KENO5A-PC results will only be used as additional information in support of the analytical results.

Evaluation and Results

The results of the analytical calculations are provided in Table 2. Note that the U-235 mass required for the 11' and 6' diameter sand filter cases is much greater than the equivalent U-235 mass available in the K Area sludge. The equivalent U-235 mass in the basin is obtained by summing the equivalent U-235 mass values for each fissile isotope. The equivalent U-235 mass for an isotope is obtained by dividing the isotope's mass by its subcritical mass limit and multiplying the result by the U-235 subcritical mass limit. The fact that the required mass is greater than the available mass means that criticality is not possible in the present and future sand filters, under expected operating conditions. Criticality is possible if all of the sludge fissile mass is allowed to accumulate in a smaller area of the sand filter, contrary to expected operating behavior. For the best estimate U-235 equivalent mass (1.411 kg), all of the fissile isotopes must preferentially accumulate within a circular region in the sand filter that has a radius less than 35 cm (1.15 ft). For the best estimate mass + uncertainty case (U-235 equivalent mass = 3.67 kg), the radius of the circular region must be less than 60 cm (1.97 ft). The 35 cm circle is 4.4% of the surface area of the 11' diameter sand filter and 14.7% of the surface area of the 6' diameter sand filter. For the 60 cm circle, the percentages are 12.8% and 43.1%, respectively.

The results of the supporting KENO5A-PC calculations are given in Table 3. Recall that the fissile mass used in these calculations corresponds to the best estimate mass plus uncertainties for the K Area sludge. The results indicate very good agreement between the analytical and numerical (i.e. - computer code) methods. From the Table 3 results, one can see that, for those radii corresponding to the 11' and 6' diameter sand filters, the resulting configurations are significantly subcritical. Also, as in the analytical case, the specified fissile mass would have to preferentially accumulate in the sand filter within a circular area that has a radius less than 60 cm. In addition, it appears that the critical fissile isotope penetration depth is approximately 15 cm. For the purposes of this evaluation, it was assumed that a keff + 3 sigma value greater than or equal to 0.95 corresponds to a critical system.

Both calculational methods indicate that criticality is not possible in the present and future sand filters, given the maximum available fissile mass in the sludge and the operating characteristics of the sand filters. Both methods also agree as to the extent of preferential accumulation that is required to make criticality possible, under ideal conditions. There is no identified mechanism by which the necessary amount of fissile material could accumulate in the required critical configuration.

In addition to the above calculational results, there are some favorable aspects of the sand filter problem which were not included in this evaluation that will further increase the overall level of criticality safety associated with sand filter operation:

- This evaluation did not consider those materials in the sludge that are neutron absorbers, such as U-238 and iron. The presence of these materials will serve to decrease the reactivity of any configuration.

- As was mentioned earlier, the sand filter is backwashed per management direction or when the pressure drop across it reaches a preset level. This operation moves material from the sand filter to the settler tank and, thus, helps to prevent large accumulations of fissile material in the sand filter.

Discussion of Contingencies

Since the results of this evaluation indicate that criticality is not possible, implementation of the double contingency principle is not applicable for sand filter operation. Therefore, no discussion of contingencies is required.

Design Features and Administratively Controlled Limits and Requirements

Since the results of this evaluation indicate that a sand filter criticality is not possible, no criticality safety operating limits are required. This evaluation, however, does take credit for one design feature of the sand filter. The sand filter is designed such that the water that comes into the filter tank is spread over the entire surface of the filter medium. This also serves to spread the fissile isotopes in the water over the entire filter surface. This distribution of fissile material over a large surface area helps prevent the formation of a critical configuration. Any changes in this sand filter design feature would invalidate the conclusions of this evaluation and would require that a new evaluation be performed.

CONCLUSION

The formation of a critical configuration in the sand filter is not considered possible. The fissile mass required to satisfy the areal density requirements for the sand filter geometry is greater than the total disassembly basin sludge fissile mass that is available to be sent to the sand filter. For the fissile mass that is available, no mechanisms have been identified by which this mass is concentrated into the required critical configuration within the sand filter. As a result, there are no criticality safety operating limits required for the sand filter. Any sand filter modifications or changes in operational characteristics that affect the assumptions made in this evaluation will require a re-examination of the criticality safety aspects of the sand filter.

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TABLE 1

K DISASSEMBLY BASIN FISSILE MASSES

Isotope	Best Estimate Mass (grams)	Conservative Mass (grams)	Subcritical Mass Limit (grams)	Subcritical Mass Limit Reference	Mass in KENO Calculation (grams)
U-233	0.7	1.8	500	ANS-8.1	1.8
U-235	906.9	2357.9	700	ANS-8.1	2859.1
Pu-239	191.3	497.4	450	ANS-8.1	497.4
Pu-241	3.8	9.9	200	ANS-8.15	9.9
Am-242m	3.3	8.6	13	ANS-8.15	*
Cm-243	1.9	4.9	90	ANS-8.15	*

* U-235 mass in the KENO calculations was increased by an amount equivalent to Am-242m and Cm-243 since Am-242m and Cm-243 are not available in the cross section library used with KENO.

NOTES:

1. Subcritical areal density limit for U-235 = 0.40 g/cm^2 (ANS-8.1).

2. Conservative mass is based on an assumed 30% uncertainty in basin sample analyses and a doubling of sludge depth estimate (Multiplicative Factor = 2.6).

3. The mass values in the above Table are bounding for K and L Areas.

TABLE 2

U-235 MASS REQUIRED TO REACH AREAL DENSITY SUBCRITICAL LIMIT VS. SAND FILTER RADIUS

Sand Filter Radius (cm)	U-235 Mass (kg)
167.64 (11' Diameter)	35.3
150.0	28.3
100.0	12.6
91.44 (6' Diameter)	10.5
80.0	8.0
70.0	6.2
60.0	4.5
50.0	3.1
40.0	2.0
35.0	1.5

NOTE: For K Area Disassembly Basin Sludge:

Best Estimate U-235 Equivalent Mass = 1.411 kg
Best Estimate + Uncertainty = 3.67 kg

TABLE 3

KENO5A-PC RESULTS

Cylinder Radius (cm)	Fissile Layer (cm)	keff	Sigma	keff + 3 Sigma *
167.64	5.0	0.31188	0.00616	0.33034
167.64	25.0	0.21867	0.00194	0.22450
167.64	70.72	0.11087	0.00064	0.11277
91.44	5.0	0.63677	0.01136	0.67083
91.44	25.0	0.57012	0.00501	0.58516
91.44	70.72	0.32678	0.00145	0.33112
60.0	5.0	0.81231	0.01291	0.85103
60.0	15.0	0.95132	0.01147	0.98574
60.0	25.0	0.91979	0.00723	0.94147
60.0	35.0	0.83733	0.00782	0.86080
60.0	70.72	0.59799	0.00478	0.61233
50.0	15.0	1.06155	0.01180	1.09693
40.0	15.0	1.17012	0.01390	1.21181

* Compare to K_{crit} = 0.95 to determine critical configurations.

WSRC-TR-93-614
REV. 0
UNCLASSIFIED
MAY 1994

KEYWORDS
TECHNICAL
REACTORS
CRITICALITY
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