




UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

September 3, 2009

MEMORANDUM TO: R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Chairman Jaczko 

SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF BURIED PIPING AT NUCLEAR REACTOR FACILITIES

The issue of leaking buried piping at nuclear reactor facilities has garnered much attention and debate, especially lately. While most of these incidents involve non-safety related pipes and, in the end, have not jeopardized public health and safety, the agency's message in handling these events has focused on the specific incidents as they occur. I believe, however, that we need to look at what the agency is doing on a generic level in order to gather more information that could enhance our understanding of buried piping.

Therefore, staff should prepare an information paper within 90 days of the date of this memo explaining the generic activities currently underway or planned on the issue of leaks from buried piping. The staff should also discuss any activities or plans that would address the following items:

- Evaluation of the adequacy of current NRC requirements for design, inspection and maintenance of safety-related buried piping, including requirements for operating reactors, renewal of licenses, and new reactor licenses.
- Evaluation of the adequacy of current American Society of Mechanical Engineers Code requirements for design, inspection and maintenance of safety-related buried piping.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of current requirements and voluntary initiatives for the design, inspection and maintenance of buried piping (both safety and non-safety related) to ensure public health and protection of the environment.
- Recommendations for revisions, if necessary, to existing regulations, requirements, practices, or oversight related to the integrity of buried piping.

cc: Commissioner Klein
Commissioner Svinicki
OGC
SECY