



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

NRC INSPECTION MANUAL

ILPB

PART 9900: TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

ASME BOILER AND PRESSURE VESSEL CODE, SECTION III

A. PURPOSE

To provide guidance on the problem of procurement of ASME Section III replacements that are not currently available in full compliance with the stamping and documentation requirements of Section III of the Code.

B. BACKGROUND

Because of the decline in nuclear plant orders in the United States, a number of utilities are experiencing difficulties in obtaining replacements for components that were originally constructed in accordance with Section III of the Code. This decline in nuclear power plant orders has caused certain manufacturing companies that previously provided nuclear-grade components in accordance with Section III of the Code to allow the Certificates of Authorization to expire. In other cases, companies have discontinued a product line or sold a product line to another company that does not have a Certificate of Authorization and, therefore, does not manufacture nuclear-grade components. Some of the companies have retained the capability to provide components which meet the design, fabrication, and examination requirements of Section III of the Code. However, because of the limited demand for nuclear-grade components and parts, these companies have not maintained their Certificates of Authorization and their related agreements with the Authorized Inspection Agencies.

Even though the manufacturer of an original component does not currently manufacture nuclear components and parts, it may sometimes be necessary to procure replacements from the original manufacturer in order to ensure adequate operation and proper fit and function. In special cases, consideration may be given to procurement of replacements from the original manufacturer in order to avoid an adverse impact on existing components or systems. However, it is also necessary to obtain objective evidence that the quality of the replacement is adequate. When replacements are considered as special cases, they shall be procured in a manner consistent with the staff position provided in the following section.

C. DISCUSSION

Where replacements are no longer available in full compliance with the stamping and documentation requirements of Section III of the Code, they

shall be procured under the utility's Quality Assurance Program that is in conformance with 10 CFR Part 50, Appendix B and included in the plant operational Quality Assurance list. Furthermore, these replacements shall meet all other applicable requirements of Section III (including third party inspection by an Authorized Nuclear Inspector) endorsed by NRC regulations except that the Code N-symbol need not be applied.

To use this approach a licensee must first establish that an equivalent Section III stamped replacement is not available. When replacements are required in accordance with Article IWA-7000 of Section XI of the Code, cost cannot be used as a justification for purchasing non-stamped parts.

Licensees that choose this method of obtaining replacement parts need to submit a list of replacements in a Final Safety Analysis Report annual update and certify their compliance with guidance provided in accordance with Generic Letter 89-XX, and in conformance with 10 CFR 50.59. Licensees shall retain on file for the service lifetime of each replacement that information detailing the basis for the action and all other related documentation in order to demonstrate compliance with Generic Letter 89-09.

D. REFERENCE

The guidance in this directive was extracted from Generic Letter 89-XX, "NRC Position on ASME Section III Replacements." The complete generic letter is in NUDOCS (microfiche 69765/036).

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