

Memorandum

Vermont Department of Public Service

March 20, 2013

To: Vermont State Nuclear Advisory Panel

From: Uldis Vanags, State Nuclear Engineer

Subject: Loss of Reactor Blowout Panel Due to Incorrect Ventilation Lineup

On March 18, 2013, at about 0400, while conducting a ventilation lineup, Vermont Yankee experienced an improper operation of the ventilation system which resulted in increased pressure in the Reactor Building and a Blowout Panel dislodged on the west side of the building.

The reactor building has 40 Blowout Panels that are about 5 feet by 10 feet in dimension and are made of primarily aluminum. The Panels are secured with a wire rope to prevent them from falling to the ground when they release. However, in this case the Panel that released fell onto the Turbine Building roof. There were no injuries from the Panel falling onto the Turbine Roof. The Panels are designed to release in the event of over pressure in the reactor building to protect the structure, systems and components in the event of a tornado. The Reactor Building serves as a secondary containment that is at negative pressure so all air in the building is vented up the plant stack.

Vermont Yankee is currently in a refueling outage, and secondary containment was not required at the time the event occurred. Within approximately ½ hour, Vermont Yankee restarted reactor building ventilation to reestablish a negative pressure and exhaust up the plant stack. A replacement Panel was installed to the Reactor Building, and Vermont Yankee will conduct a test to verify that Technical Specification requirements are met before moving fuel.

NRC Resident Inspectors have been briefed by Vermont Yankee on this event. This event has been entered into the Vermont Yankee corrective action process. Vermont Yankee will complete a root cause analysis within 30 days. There was no health or safety risk to the public.