



Mining and Nuclear Engineering

April 22nd, 2019

To: ATTN: Document Control Desk, Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001
From: Dr. Joseph Graham, Reactor Director and level 2 person, MSTR, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla, MO
CC: William B. Kennedy, Project Manager

Subject: Missouri University of Science and Technology – Courtesy Status Update on Staffing Developments at the Missouri S&T Reactor (R-79)

Dear Mr. Kennedy,

I am writing this letter to you as a courtesy to inform you about recent staffing changes that have affected and will continue to affect operations at the Missouri S&T Reactor (MSTR). While these issues have not jeopardized regulatory compliance or safety, we have, at least temporarily, needed to cease operations. We would like to keep you aware of the situation as it develops. Recently, one of the reactor staff, Mr. Craig Reisner, resigned from the university, primarily due to dissatisfaction with his compensation. Another reactor staff, Mr. Anthony Alchin, may leave in the coming months for similar reasons. Unfortunately, the University of Missouri system is facing deep budget cuts and it has been difficult to get the campus administration to commit the necessary resources to retain skilled staff. Mr. Reisner and Mr. Alchin were the only two university employees with active SRO licenses for the MSTR. Moreover, our attempts to promote Mr. Alchin to the designated SRO position (viz., the Missouri S&T job title) have also met resistance. The new reactor manager, Mr. Ethan Taber, who started this past January, is scheduled to take his NRC exam in October of this year. In the intervening time however, it appears that we will have to temporarily cease operations.

A potentially greater issue is that the MSTR may be headed towards a situation where no member of our campus' staff or faculty will hold an active SRO license. Though we are exploring several options to avoid this, should it transpire, we are proposing to take the following course of action unless otherwise directed by the Commission:

1. Keys to the reactor console (the magnet keys) will be secured in the existing location, a combination safe. The combination will be changed and the new combination will be securely transmitted to, and stored by, the campus Radiation Safety Officer until an SRO is available (e.g., the Reactor Manager obtains his SRO license).
2. We will attempt to rehire the former SRO as a part time employee to maintain his license and be available to assist with operations during the NRC exam scheduled





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this fall. We will also attempt to do the same with a student who also possesses her SRO license and who is scheduled to graduate this May.

3. Should we fail to retain a full or part time employee with an active SRO license through October, we will be communicating with the NRC on the best course of action to take with respect to re-scheduling the NRC exam. This may involve having our reactor manager train at another university research reactor and perform the operations portion of the exam at that facility. While it is understood that there is some precedent for this, we would rely on NRC input for selecting the most appropriate facility or other alternative.

We will keep you abreast of the situation as it develops. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Graham".

Joseph Graham, Ph.D.
Reactor Director
Missouri University of Science and
Technology
grahamjose@mst.edu
(573)341-7759

