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Standard Practice for CONDUCTING SURVEILLANCE TESTS FOR LIGHT-WATER COOLED NUCLEAR POWER REACTOR VESSELS, E 706 (IF)¹

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^{e1} NOTE—Section 9.2.3 was corrected editorially and the designation date was changed July 1, 1982.

^{e2} NOTE—The title was changed editorially in July 1985.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers procedures for monitoring the radiation-induced changes in the mechanical properties of ferritic materials in the beltline of light-water cooled nuclear power reactor vessels. This practice includes guidelines for designing a minimum surveillance program, selecting materials, and evaluating test results.

1.2 This practice was developed for all light-water cooled nuclear power reactor vessels for which the predicted maximum neutron fluence ($E > 1$ MeV) at the end of the design lifetime exceeds 1×10^{21} n/m² (1×10^{17} n/cm²) at the inside surface of the reactor vessel.

2. Applicable Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

A 370 Methods and Definitions for Mechanical Testing of Steel Products²

E 8 Methods of Tension Testing of Metallic Materials³

E 21 Recommended Practice for Elevated Temperature Tension Tests of Metallic Materials³

E 23 Methods for Notched Bar Impact Testing of Metallic Materials³

E 208 Method for Conducting Drop-Weight Test to Determine Nil-Ductility Transition Temperature of Ferritic Steels³

E 482 Guide for Application of Neutron Transport Methods for Reactor Vessel Surveillance⁴

E 560 Recommended Practice for Extrapolating Reactor Vessel Surveillance Dosimetry Results⁴

2.2 *American Society of Mechanical Engineers Standard: Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Sections III and XI*⁵

3. Significance and Use

3.1 Predictions of neutron radiation effects on pressure vessel steels are considered in the design of light-water cooled nuclear power reactors. Changes in system operating parameters are made throughout the service life of the reactor vessel to account for radiation effects. Because of the variability in the behavior of reactor vessel steels, a surveillance program is warranted to monitor changes in the properties of actual vessel materials caused by long-term exposure to the neutron radiation and temperature environment of the given reactor vessel. This practice describes the criteria that should be considered in planning and implementing surveillance test programs and points out precautions that should be taken to ensure that: (1) capsule exposures can be related to beltline exposures, (2) materials selected for the surveillance program are samples of those materials most likely to limit the operation of the reactor vessel, and (3) the tests yield results useful for the evaluation of radiation effects on the reactor vessel.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E-10 on Nuclear Technology and Applications.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 01.04.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 03.01.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 12.02.

⁵ Available from the American Society of Automotive Engineers, 345 E. 47th St., New York, N. Y. 10017.



3.2 The design of a surveillance program for a given reactor vessel must consider the existing body of data on similar materials in addition to the specific materials used for that reactor vessel. The amount of such data and the similarity of exposure conditions and material characteristics will determine their applicability for predicting the radiation effects. As a large amount of pertinent data becomes available it may be possible to reduce the surveillance effort for selected reactors by integrating their surveillance programs.

4. Definitions

4.1 *adjusted reference temperature*—the reference temperature adjusted for irradiation effects by adding to RT_{NDT} the transition temperature shift (see 4.15).

4.2 *base metal (parent material)*—as-fabricated plate material or forging material other than a weldment or its corresponding heat-affected-zone (HAZ).

4.3 *belpline*—the irradiated region of the reactor vessel (shell material including weld regions and plates or forgings) that directly surrounds the effective height of the active core, and adjacent regions that are predicted to experience sufficient neutron damage to warrant consideration in the selection of surveillance material.

4.4 *EOL*—end-of-life; the design lifetime in terms of years; effective full power years; or neutron fluence.

4.5 *index temperature*—that temperature corresponding to a predetermined level of absorbed energy, lateral expansion, or fracture appearance obtained from the average (best fit) Charpy transition curve.

4.6 *fraction strength*—in a tensile test, the load at fracture divided by the initial cross-sectional area of the test specimen.

4.7 *fracture stress*—in a tensile test, the load at fracture divided by the cross-sectional area of the test specimen at time of fracture.

4.8 *heat-affected-zone (HAZ)*—plate material or forging material extending outward from, but not including, the weld fusion zone in which the microstructure of the base metal has been altered by the heat of the welding process.

4.9 *lead factor*—the ratio of the neutron flux density at the location of the specimens in a surveillance capsule to the neutron flux density

at the reactor pressure vessel inside surface at the peak fluence location.

4.10 *neutron fluence*—the time integrated neutron flux density, expressed in neutrons per square metre or neutrons per square centimetre.

4.11 *neutron flux density*—a measure of the intensity of neutron radiation within a given range of neutron energies; the product of the neutron density and velocity, measured in neutrons per square metre-second or neutrons per square centimetre-second.

4.12 *neutron spectrum*—the distribution of neutrons by energy levels impinging on a surface, which can be calculated based on analysis of multiple neutron dosimeter measurements, on the assumption of a fission spectrum, or from a calculation of the neutron energy distribution.

4.13 *nil-ductility transition temperature (T_{NDT})*—the maximum temperature at which a standard drop weight specimen breaks when tested in accordance with Method E 208.

4.14 *reference temperature (RT_{NDT})*—See subarticle NB-2300 of the ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section III, “Nuclear Power Plant Components.”

4.15 *transition temperature shift (ΔRT_{NDT}) or adjustment of reference temperature*—the difference in the 41-J (30-ft·lbf) index temperatures from the average Charpy curves measured before and after irradiation.

4.16 *transition region*—the region on the transition temperature curve in which toughness increases rapidly with rising temperature. In terms of fracture appearance, it is characterized by a rapid change from a primarily cleavage (crystalline) fracture mode to primarily shear (fibrous) fracture mode.

4.17 *Charpy transition curve*—a graphic presentation of Charpy data, including absorbed energy, lateral expansion, and fracture appearance, extending over a range including the lower shelf energy (< 5 % shear), transition region, and the upper shelf energy (> 95 % shear).

4.18 *upper shelf energy level*—the average energy value for all Charpy specimens (normally three) whose test temperature is above the upper end of the transition region. For specimens tested in sets of three at each test temperature, the set having the highest average may be regarded as defining the upper shelf energy.



5. Test Materials

5.1 Materials Selection:

5.1.1 Surveillance test materials shall be prepared from samples taken from the actual materials used in fabricating the beltline of the reactor vessel. These surveillance test materials shall include one heat of the base metal, one butt weld, and one weld heat-affected-zone (HAZ). The base metal, weld metal, and HAZ (Note 1) materials included in the program shall be those predicted to be most limiting, with regard to setting pressure-temperature limits, for operation of the reactor to compensate for radiation effects during its lifetime (Note 2). The beltline materials shall be evaluated on the basis of initial reference temperature (RT_{NDT}), the predicted changes in the initial properties as a function of chemical composition (for example, copper (Cu) and phosphorus (P)) (Note 3), and the neutron fluence during reactor operation.

NOTE 1—The base metal for the weld heat-affected-zone (HAZ) to be monitored shall correspond to one of the base metals selected for the surveillance program.

NOTE 2—The data used for the selection of surveillance test materials shall be that obtained in accordance with ASME Code Section III requirements.

NOTE 3—Other residual/alloy elements such as Ni, Si, Mn, Mo, Cr, C, S, and V may contribute to overall radiation behavior of ferritic materials.

5.1.2 The base metal and the weld with the highest adjusted reference temperature at end-of-life shall be selected for the surveillance program. If the Charpy upper shelf energy of any of the beltline materials is predicted to drop to a marginal level (currently considered to be 68 J (50 ft·lbf) at the quarter thickness ($\frac{1}{4}$ T) location) during the operating lifetime of the vessel, provisions shall be made to also include that material in the surveillance program, preferably in the form of fracture toughness specimens. These additional specimens may be substituted in part for specimens of the material least likely to be limiting.

5.1.3 The adjusted reference temperature of the materials in the reactor vessel beltline shall be determined by adding the appropriate values of transition temperature shift to the reference temperature of the unirradiated material. The transition temperature shift and Charpy upper shelf energy drop can be determined

from relationships of fluence and chemical composition.

5.4 *Material Sampling*—A minimum test program shall consist of the material selected in 5.1, taken from the following locations: (1) base metal from one plate or forging used in the beltline, (2) weld metal made with the same heat of weld wire and lot of flux and by the same welding practice as that used for the selected beltline weld, and (3) the heat-affected-zone associated with the base metal noted above.

5.5 *Archive Materials*—Representative test stock to fill at least two additional capsules with test specimens of the base metal, weld, and heat-affected-zone materials used in the program shall be retained with full documentation and identification. It is recommended that this test stock be in the form of full-thickness sections of the original materials (plates, forgings, and welds).

5.6 *Fabrication History*—The fabrication history (austenitizing, quench and tempering, and post-weld heat treatment) of the test materials shall be fully representative of the fabrication history of the materials in the beltline of the reactor vessel and shall be recorded.

5.7 *Chemical Analysis Requirements*—The chemical analysis required by the appropriate product specifications for the surveillance test materials (base metal and as-deposited weld metal) shall be recorded and shall include phosphorus (P), sulfur (S), copper (Cu), vanadium (V), and nickel (Ni), as well as all other alloying and residual elements commonly analyzed for in low-alloy steel products. The product analysis shall be verified by analyzing a minimum of three test specimens randomly selected from both the base metal and the as-deposited weld metal.

6. Test Specimens

6.1 *Type of Specimens*—Charpy V-notch impact specimens corresponding to the Type A specimen described in Methods A 370 and E 23 shall be used. The gage section of irradiated and unirradiated tension specimens shall be of the same size and shape. Tension specimens of the type, size, and shape described in Methods A 370 and E 8 are recommended. Additional fracture toughness test specimens shall be employed to supplement the information from the Charpy V-notch specimens if the surveillance