Construction and Design Flaws at Diablo Canyon

MARCH 1978: Two hundred ninety-two welds were found to be defective. The errors were attributed to workers who had not been given proper instructions, and who had not received the specific training needed to make the welds.

APRIL 1978: PG&E discovered defects in switches in at least 12 motors related to reactor safety. NRC Inspector Dennis Kirsch said springs were found to shake during simulated earthquakes, causing the switches to turn on and off automatically.

APRIL 1978: Diablo Canyon was found to contain a design flaw common to all Westinghouse plants, specifically, an error in instrumentation that would have prevented emergency cooling equipment from operating in the event of a Three Mile Island type of accident.

MAY 1978: During a routine inspection, cracks were found in 78 massive pipe restraints. The purpose of the restraints is to control whipping action by a severed pipe and thus prevent damage to other pipes and equipment.

JANUARY 1981: Winter storms severely damaged the breakwater at Diablo Canyon. The breakwater was intended to prevent damage to the air vents and auxiliary saltwater pumps in the plant's intake structure. [In the Summer of 1982 PG&E began repairing the breakwater at a projected cost of $18 million dollars.]

SEPTEMBER 1981: Officials disclosed a "mirror-image" blueprint error relating to earthquake safety supports in the annulus, an area of the reactor where dozens of pipes carry water for the various cooling systems. It was found that the diagrams for Unit II were used in preparing stress calculations for pipes in the annulus of Unit I. This discovery led to the suspension of the low power test license and prompted further inquiry, which has to date raised over 200 questions about plant safety.

OCTOBER 1981: PG&E engineers miscalculated the weight of safety related equipment. The equipment includes five massive cooling fans that help to remove heat from inside the reactor building.

OCTOBER 1981: Problems were disclosed involving the "containment spray system", a piece of equipment built like a huge shower to spray cooling water throughout the reactor building in the event of an accident. The errors include design defects affecting the timing of spray pumps and deficiencies in calculating the necessary seismic supports.