

Stearns Roger Services

Improved W17x17 Gripper

Challenge

During refueling operations of a reactor, it is imperative no delays are experienced. Due to recent industry events that challenge refueling operations, utilities want proven reliability with their W17x17 grippers. Aging refueling systems and distorted fuel has enabled the possibility of grippers to lodge on fuel assembly end fittings (E/F).

Solution

Framatome's new W17 gripper design prevents E/F lodging, even from a damaged fuel assembly. The improved gripper S-pin design allows more compliance during initial engagement with the upper E/F and the final engagement matches the original design criteria. The enhanced design is a like-for-like installation eliminating the need for plant modification.



Customer benefits

- Maintains existing interface
 - Maintains the exact interface to inner mast (Gripper Tube Assembly) and envelope as original gripper
 - Bolt pattern, length, and fuel assembly indexing dimensions are the same
 - Replacement of inner mast and gripper actuation tube is not required
- Minor changes made to gripper to improve functionality
 - Gripper finger body edges softened
 - An 1/8 inch chamfer applied to each finger hooks' outside edge
 - Lower casting and all other gripper components remain unmodified
- Guide Pin Release
 - Improved gripper has ability to retract the guide pins for extra aid in gripper release

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