

In early August, a team of eight highly qualified U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspectors put a variety of safety systems at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant under the microscope. They donned hard-hats and performed hands-on inspections of pumps, valves and other components. They interviewed plant managers and employees and reviewed company calculations and analyses. And they pored over countless documents.

All told, our team, which included three contractors, spent more than 900 hours at the plant. The goal: carry out a pilot inspection to verify compliance with the plant's design, with a focus on key safety systems. The engineering inspection also targeted some of the systems important for a 20-percent power increase proposed for Vermont Yankee. The state's nuclear engineer observed much of the inspection.

Now, we are ready to discuss the results of that inspection – along with the results of a Special Inspection into misplaced spent fuel segments – Thursday night at Brattleboro Union High School at 6 p.m. We will first provide the inspection results to the Vermont State Nuclear Advisory Panel (V-SNAP) and then take questions from the public.

The inspection reports have been on our website since Dec. 2 at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/vermont-yankee-issues/engineering-inspection.html#one> .

The engineering inspection report is an unambiguous picture of what the inspectors found. We looked at a sample of the most safety-significant elements of the facility to draw a clear picture of the overall state of the reactor and its systems. In a nutshell, the team found that the plant systems and components reviewed would be capable of performing their intended safety function and that there are sufficient design controls implemented for engineering work.

However, the inspectors also identified eight findings of very low safety significance, which were also violations of NRC requirements. None of the problems identified would prevent the systems from performing their intended safety functions or prevent identification of degraded conditions.

Here are the findings:

- The team questioned the ability of the Vernon Hydro-Electric Station to supply power to Vermont Yankee during an emergency.
- The analyzed time for initiating an emergency cooling system known as Reactor Core Isolation Cooling (RCIC) from alternate control panels had not been updated.
- The input for condensate storage tank temperature used in accident and event analyses was incorrect.
- There was a potential for over-pressurization of the RCIC lube-oil cooler upon loss of instrument air.
- Problems affecting a control valve for a RCIC lube oil cooler were not entered into the corrective action program.
- A lack of validation for motor-operated valve periodic testing methodology was identified.

- The procedural guidance was not sufficient for assessing the operability of a 115-kv off-site power supply.
- There was an insufficient basis for the technical specification minimum for the degraded grid relay dropout setting.

What's next? Entergy must correct the issues we are raising. Issues that could impact the proposed power uprate will require Entergy to provide more information to the NRC staff. The staff will then review this information to ensure relevant safety issues are properly addressed before an NRC decision on the uprate request.

It's important to note that the staff expects to hold a separate meeting in the future to discuss the proposed power uprate. Because the staff review of the Vermont Yankee application is ongoing, it would be premature to discuss the uprate proposal itself now. We have already addressed the process for the power uprate review at our last meeting in March.

Recently, the NRC announced a delay in the planned decision on the uprate application beyond the projected January time frame. We need more information, and until we have had time to fully evaluate that data and complete the review process, the agency will not make a decision on the uprate request.

The NRC has dedicated significant resources to reviewing the safety of Vermont Yankee and will continue to do so. Ensuring the safety and security of this plant, and all others, remains our highest priority. We look forward to a meaningful discussion of the engineering and misplaced spent fuel inspections with V-SNAP and members of the public on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>.

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