



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES REPORT ON VERMONT YANKEE ENGINEERING INSPECTION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a report containing the results of a comprehensive engineering review conducted this summer at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. Known as a Component Design Bases Inspection (CDBI), the review was carried out by a team of five NRC inspectors and three contractors. It involved three weeks of on-site assessments performed from July 21 to Aug. 14, 2008, at the Vernon, Vt., facility and entailed more than 700 hours of direct inspection activity.

Three “green,” or very low safety significance, inspection findings have been identified. All three have been classified as non-cited violations. As a result, the plant’s owner, Entergy, will be required to enter them into the corrective action program for Vermont Yankee and complete a more comprehensive assessment of the issues. The corrective actions will be subject to review during future NRC inspections.

“Component Design Bases Inspections are an important part of our regulatory toolkit,” NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. “We use these inspections, in tandem with our numerous other reviews, to gain insights into whether the way a plant is operated is consistent with the way it was designed. In this instance, we did not find any problems that rose above the level of very low safety significance.”

The inspection findings are as follows: An issue involving the proper evaluation and documentation of test results for plant back-up power batteries, although actual battery capacity was found to be sufficient; an issue pertaining to a procedure deficiency that resulted in an incorrect assumption being used in the analysis dealing with the loss of all A.C. power for the plant, also known as a “station blackout” condition; and an issue involving the testing of plant emergency diesel generators at the maximum manual load (above emergency levels), although it was determined that the emergency diesel generators would be available in the event of a loss of off-site power. None of these issues would have resulted in safety equipment being unable to perform the intended function if needed.

All told, the CDBI team performed a detailed review of 23 plant components, four risk-significant actions by plant operators and three operating experience items.

CDBIs are part of the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process. They are carried out by the NRC about once every 3 years at each operating nuclear power plant in the U.S. In the case of the Vermont Yankee review, the Vermont Department of Public Service (DPS) observed the inspection, as well as a week of pre-inspection preparations. In addition, the NRC coordinated with the DPS on which components, actions and issues would be evaluated during the CDBI.

A copy of the report will be available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML082700860. ADAMS is accessible via the agency's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> . Help in using ADAMS is available by contacting the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV .

Separately, the NRC is continuing to review a license renewal application for Vermont Yankee. That application seeks a 20-year license extension for the plant, whose current 40-year operating license is set to expire on March 21, 2012.

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