



NRC NEWS

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NRC SENDS SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM TO BEAVER VALLEY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has sent a team of specialists to review the circumstances surrounding the identification of air trapped in a safety system at the Beaver Valley Unit 1 nuclear power plant in Shippingport, Pa. The team began its work at the site today. There are two nuclear reactors at Beaver Valley, both operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company (FENOC).

On Sept. 23, FENOC detected air (called a "void") in the suction lines for both trains of the low-head safety-injection system (LHSI) at Beaver Valley Unit 1. (The low-head safety-injection system is one of the systems that supply water to the reactor in the event of an accident at the plant. It is also used to circulate cooling water following an accident.) At the time, FENOC determined that the system would have operated as designed. On Oct. 4 and 5, the company effectively eliminated the void by venting both loops of the system and filled the system with water. The company also verified the same conditions did not exist at Beaver Valley Unit 2.

There was no immediate danger to public health and safety or the environment from this condition.

The NRC's Resident Inspectors assigned to Beaver Valley have been following up on the issue. The Special Inspection Team will expand on the activities of the Resident Inspectors. The team, with three full-time and two part-time members, will assess whether the initial voided condition of the system would have impacted the long-term cooling function of the LHSI system. In addition, the team will focus on assessing the timeliness and effectiveness of the company's corrective actions.

NRC Region I Administrator Sam Collins said, "Although this did not impact public safety or the environment, it is important that we have a thorough understanding of what happened and why it happened. The team will also look at the actions the company has taken to prevent similar occurrences in the future."

The team is expected to be on-site at least through the end of the week. An inspection report detailing the team's findings will be issued 45 days after the end of the inspection.

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