



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE AT OCONEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Duke Energy Corporation officials on Monday, April 24, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the Oconee nuclear power plant, located near Seneca in northwestern South Carolina.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Complex Building Auditorium at the plant site. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Oconee plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region II Administrator William Travers said. "This meeting is a chance for us to discuss that safety performance with the company, with local officials and with people living near the plant."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/oco_2005q4.pdf.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," depending on the safety significance of the issues involved.

The NRC said the Oconee plant operated safely during 2005 with all inspection findings being "green," or very low safety significance, and all performance indicators also indicating performance at levels requiring no additional NRC oversight in the third and fourth quarters of the year.

However, plant performance for the first two quarters of 2005 was still within the regulatory response column of the NRC's Action Matrix based on a "white" inspection finding in 2004 related to staffing of the plant's standby shutdown facility. That finding has now been closed by the NRC.

Current plant performance means the NRC plans to conduct only routine baseline inspections at the plant for the rest of 2006, but there are several issues still under NRC staff review that may warrant additional inspections if they are determined to be of greater than "green" or very low safety significance. The NRC staff will also conduct several non-routine inspections, including the independent spent fuel storage installation, containment sump blockage and operator licensing exams.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by specialists from the Region II Office in Atlanta, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md.

Current information for the Oconee plant is available on the NRC web site at:

www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO1/oco1_chart.html ,
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO2/oco2_chart.html and
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO3/oco3_chart.html .

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