



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. III-04-032

May 6, 2004

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION OF SHUTDOWN AT DRESDEN NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a special inspection team to review the circumstances surrounding the automatic reactor shutdown Wednesday at Unit 3 of the Dresden Nuclear Power Station. The two-reactor facility, operated by Exelon Generation Company, is located near Morris, Illinois.

The Unit 3 reactor shut down automatically when the plant lost its offsite electrical power. Emergency diesel generators started to supply power to plant safety systems.

“There was no safety threat to plant workers, the general public, or the environment associated with the shutdown,” said NRC Regional Administrator James Caldwell. “The NRC’s resident inspectors were in the plant’s control room to monitor the reactor operators’ response to the shutdown,” he added.

The NRC’s four-member inspection team will review the causes of the loss of offsite power and how the plant staff and equipment responded to the power loss.

The second Dresden unit was shut down at the time for unrelated maintenance. It was not affected by the Unit 3 loss of power.

The utility’s preliminary investigation has determined that the power loss occurred when a circuit breaker opened unexpectedly, cutting off the outside power sources. At the time, plant workers were restoring normal electrical power connections following maintenance work.

Power was restored to the plant after about 2½ hours. Unit 3 remains shut down while the cause of the power loss is fully investigated and necessary repairs are made.

The report of the special inspection will be publicly available about a month following the completion of the inspection. It may be obtained from the Region III Office of Public Affairs or from the NRC’s online document library: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> - use docket number 05000249 to locate Dresden 3 documents. Assistance in using the online document library is available by calling the NRC Public Document Room at 800-397-4209.

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