



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406

www.nrc.gov

No. I-04-029

CONTACT: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

May 11, 2004

Email: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF NINE MILE POINT 1 AND 2 NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, LLC, on Tuesday, May 18, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Nine Mile Point 1 and 2 nuclear power plants. The facilities are located in Scriba, N.Y.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. in the Joint News Center at the Oswego County Airport, on County Route 176 in Fulton, N.Y. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

The performance period to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2003. In addition, NRC staff will provide a brief overview of how the agency's Reactor Oversight Process works.

A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plants 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/nmp_2003q4.pdf.

Overall, the Nine Mile Point plants operated safely and met all cornerstone objectives during the period. (Cornerstones are program areas where NRC measures plant safety performance.)

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess performance at nuclear power plants. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. During the first quarter of 2003, a "white" finding, representing low to moderate safety significance, was identified at Nine Mile Point 1. The finding involved degraded piping in the reactor building closed-loop cooling system. However, based on a supplemental inspection conducted last

September, the NRC determined that the root causes of the issue were understood by the company, the extent of the problem had been identified and corrective actions sufficient to prevent a recurrence had been implemented. Therefore, that issue has now been closed out.

Nine Mile Point 2 received a “white” performance indicator during the third quarter of 2003. That performance indicator, which measures the number of unplanned scrams, or shutdowns, per 7,000 hours of online operation, changed in response to two automatic scrams during the quarter. The NRC planned to conduct a supplemental inspection at the plant in March to review the plant’s response to the performance indicator change.

In addition, the NRC staff last year identified a substantive cross-cutting issue in the area of problem identification and resolution at the Nine Mile Point plants. The company took steps in 2003 to improve its problem identification and resolution process. However, a number of inspection findings during the assessment period involved ineffective corrective actions for longstanding equipment deficiencies and narrowly focused operability assessments. As a result, the issue will remain open for now and the NRC will monitor progress in that area via its normal inspection program.

All other inspection findings and performance indicators for both plants were “green” during the period.

On the subject of security issues, the NRC has issued several orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The agency has also conducted inspections to review the implementation of these requirements and has monitored the action of plant operators in response to changing threat conditions. The NRC will continue security inspections during 2004.

Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP1/nmp1_chart.html .

Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 2 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP2/nmp2_chart.html .

###