



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov> E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630) 829-9663
Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR DRESDEN NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Company on Monday, June 13, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the Dresden Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located near Morris, Ill

The meeting, which will be open to public observation, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Grundy County Administration Center, 1320 Union Street, in Morris.

Before the meeting is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of the Dresden plant, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe plant operation.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Dresden plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Dresden plant operated safely during the period. 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," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Dresden during the last quarter of 2004 were determined to be "green." However, there was a "white" performance indicator for Unit 2 during the first three quarters of 2004; and a "white" performance indicator for Unit 3 during the first two quarters of 2004. The "white" performance indicator for Unit 2 had to do with the number of unplanned automatic shutdowns; the "white" performance indicator for Unit 3 was related to the availability of one of the plant's emergency cooling systems. The cooling system performance problem occurred in 2001, but the performance indicator remained "white" because the measurement covers a three-year period.

The NRC also identified an issue in the area of human performance at the plant. Even though

there has been some improvement in this area since the beginning of 2004, personnel errors in various departments continued through the last quarter of last year. The utility has been asked to discuss its plans to address improvements in human performance during the meeting.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are problem identification and resolution, fire protection, radiological access control, and safety system design and performance.

A letter sent from the NRC Region III 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: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/dres_2004q4.pdf.

Current performance information for Dresden is available on the NRC's web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DRES2/dres2_chart.html and http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DRES3/dres3_chart.html.

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