



NRC NEWS

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NRC FINALIZES “WHITE” FINDING AT BRUNSWICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT; PLACES BRUNSWICK UNIT 1 IN THE DEGRADED CORNERSTONE COLUMN OF THE NRC’S ACTION MATRIX

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has made a final significance determination related to emergency diesel generator No. 1 performance problems at Progress Energy’s two-unit Brunswick nuclear power plant, located near Southport, N. C. This finding, combined with a separate White Mitigating Systems Performance Indicator for Emergency AC Power, places Brunswick Unit 1 in the Degraded Cornerstone column of the NRC’s Action matrix.

The NRC uses a color coded system to categorize inspection findings, ranging from “green,” for a very low safety issue, to white, yellow, and finally “red” for a highly significant safety issue.

In an April 20 letter to the company, the NRC said the “white” determination, of low to moderate safety significance, was made following an April 5 Regulatory Conference at which the company delineated numerous corrective actions aimed at improving emergency diesel reliability and foreign material exclusion controls. The company is being issued a Notice of Violation for failure to satisfy the requirements for a seven-day limiting condition for operation because only three of four emergency diesel generators were operable from Oct. 30 to Nov. 7 of last year. This violation was the result of the licensee taking inadequate corrective actions to prevent a repeat failure of the emergency diesel generator No. 1 bearing, failing to correctly follow a foreign material exclusion procedure during maintenance and failure to promptly identify and implement adequate actions to prevent the generator from shutting down on low lubricating oil pressure.

These issues contributed to the emergency diesel generator’s shutdown and bearing failure during a loss of offsite power event on Nov. 2, 2006. As a result the NRC is preparing to conduct a supplemental inspection of risk significant performance issues, in addition to the agency’s routine, scheduled inspections.

NRC officials said overall safety performance at the plant was adequate.

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