



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. III-08-013

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April 7, 2008

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2007 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of First Energy Nuclear Operating Company on April 15 to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located at Perry, Ohio.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. at Quail Hollow Resort, 11080 Concord-Hambden Road, in Painesville. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment, talk about the NRC and its range of activities, and be available to respond to questions and comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Perry 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."

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/perr_2007q4.pdf

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Perry 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 for Perry during 2007 were determined to be "green" while two performance indicators – one for emergency electrical power equipment performance and one for unplanned scrams – were "white" during the year, indicating a condition of low to moderate safety significance.

In addition, the NRC identified what is called a "substantive cross cutting issue" in the area of human performance – cross cutting means that the issue affects multiple areas of plant activities. The NRC identified 12 inspection finding attributed to human performance deficiencies; four were in the area of work control and planning.

Caldwell indicated that human performance had been a cross-cutting issue in prior years, but that in 2006 the NRC staff observed improvement in the human performance area. “The improvements observed in 2006, however, did not continue into 2007, the current assessment year,” he said.

In May 2007, following an update to its performance assessment of Perry, the NRC staff ended a period of heightened regulatory oversight at Perry as a result of safety equipment problems in 2003 and 2004.

The NRC continues its normal, baseline level of inspections for Perry. In addition, inspectors will provide further focus on the cross cutting issue of human performance as well as the unplanned scrams performance indicator.

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 plant activities to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are radiation protection, emergency preparedness, and reactor operator training and testing.

Current performance information for Perry is available on the NRC’s web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PERR1/perr1_chart.html.

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