



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO MEET WITH XCEL ENERGY FOR REGULATORY CONFERENCE ON POTENTIAL YELLOW FINDING AT PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet Tuesday, March 17, in Lisle, Ill. with officials of Xcel Energy, to discuss an apparent violation involving the packaging and transportation of radioactive materials last October. Xcel Energy operates the Prairie Island nuclear power plant located in Welch, Minn.

The meeting will be held at 1 p.m. (CDT) in the Second Floor Conference Room of the NRC's Region III Office, 2443 Warrenville Road, in Lisle. The public is invited to observe the meeting and may also listen to the discussion on a telephone conference line. The public will have an opportunity to ask questions of the NRC staff before the meeting is adjourned. To obtain the conference call phone number, interested persons should contact Steven K. Orth at (630) 829-9827.

In 2008, Prairie Island staff apparently failed to adequately package and transport a shipment that contained radioactive material from the power plant to Waltz Mill, Pa., in accordance with NRC and Department of Transportation regulations. When the shipment arrived, radiological surveys showed that the external surface of the package was greater than the allowable radiation dose limits.

After reviewing the situation, the NRC staff made a preliminary determination that the issue had a medium to high or "yellow" safety significance. The agency uses a four-color scale to evaluate inspection findings: green, white, yellow and red in order of increasing safety significance.

The purpose of a regulatory conference is to permit Xcel Energy to provide its perspective on the facts and assumptions the NRC used to arrive at the finding and its preliminary safety significance. The NRC staff will later use the information to make a final determination of the safety significance. A "yellow" finding can lead to additional NRC inspections and public meetings with company management.

Details of the NRC inspection findings are discussed in the Inspection Report with the accession number ML090410466 which is available in the NRC's ADAMS document system, accessible at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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