



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region IV
612 E. Lamar Blvd., Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011-4125
Telephone: (817) 860-8128

No. IV-09-026
Contact: Victor Dricks
Phone: (817) 860-8128

July 20, 2009
E-Mail: opa4@nrc.gov

NRC CONDUCTING SPECIAL INSPECTION AT WATERFORD 3 NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is conducting a special inspection at the Waterford 3 nuclear plant in response to problems discovered with an electrical relay in a plant safety system during testing. The plant, about 25 miles west of New Orleans, La., is operated by Entergy Operations.

Operators encountered problems starting a high pressure safety injection pump during testing on June 22. They traced the problem to a faulty electrical relay, replaced it and were subsequently able to start the pump satisfactorily. The pump is used to supply cooling water to the plant's reactor core during some accident conditions.

There have been six prior failures of similar electrical relays at Waterford in the past year.

"We want to thoroughly understand the failure and its significance because of the repeat nature of the problem and the importance of this piece of equipment in protecting plant safety," said Region IV Administrator Elmo E. Collins.

A two-person team of NRC inspectors will review the circumstances related to the problem, the licensee's root cause evaluation and the effect it had on the availability and reliability of plant safety systems.

The inspection will begin today and is expected to take several days. The team will write a report about 30-45 days after completion of the inspection. The report will be available on the agency's online document library at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

###

NRC news releases are available through a free list serve subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.