



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT COMMISSION BRIEFING ON JAPAN AND THE STATION BLACKOUT RULE

Good morning. Before we begin today's meeting, I would like to recognize that this is National Administrative Professionals Week and acknowledge the dedicated efforts and high-quality performance of our agency's administrative professionals. Also, as you might have gleaned from the few youthful members with us this morning, today is Bring Your Children to Work Day at NRC Headquarters. That is a terrific program, and I am glad to so many families take advantage of it.

The Commission meets this morning to receive a brief update on the situation in Japan and the NRC's ongoing efforts to assist the Japanese government. The remainder of today's meeting will focus on the NRC's station blackout rule, which is our regulatory approach for ensuring that licensees can effectively cope with the loss of alternating current (AC) electrical power.

Severe storms in the South last night provided a stark reminder that we are not immune to the effects of natural events. Last night, Browns Ferry nuclear power plant experienced a loss of nearly all offsite power to the three units, resulting in shutdown. All safety functions performed as designed. All available emergency diesel generators started and loaded, and emergency core cooling systems are operating normally. Spent fuel pool cooling is currently in service. The plants' conditions are stable and are being placed in a cooled-down condition. I would like to convey my condolences to all those who have been affected by the severe storms across the country.

We are focusing in today's meeting on the station blackout rule because of the potentially serious reactor safety implications from the loss of all power. The staff will provide general background on the rule's development, as well as more detailed information on the structure of our regulatory approach. This is one of the many significant issues that the agency's senior level task force is examining as part of our comprehensive review of the safety of U.S. nuclear facilities.

The Commission's purpose today is not to get out in front of that review. We don't have the information yet to determine whether there are possible improvements to be made to this rule or others, in light of the events in Japan. The Commission is meeting today to assure the public that we have the information to effectively and expeditiously consider the task force's analysis and recommendations once they present their report.

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