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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT PALISADES NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has started a Special Inspection to review the circumstances surrounding the failure of a service water pump component. Service water pumps help cool safety related equipment under regular and emergency conditions. The plant has three service water pumps and at least one is required to be operable in case of an emergency.

The single-unit pressurized water reactor is operated by Entergy Nuclear Operations Inc., and is located in Covert, Mich., about 65 miles southwest of Grand Rapids.

NRC resident inspectors were immediately notified on Aug. 9 of the issue and observed the utility's actions. NRC staff identified that the problem looked similar to a previously failed component issue from 2009. A metals and materials expert from the NRC Region III office was sent on Aug. 11 to further inspect this potential repetitive issue.

Today a three-member NRC team specializing in metals, materials and pumps, will review the historical issues associated with the components at the plant, previous corrective actions, the utility's ability to review industry operating experience, and the potential susceptibility on the other service water pumps.

"There are no immediate safety concerns involved with this failure," NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius said. "Nevertheless, we want to gain a better understanding of exactly why the component failed and determine if there are steps the utility could have taken that would have prevented the failure from happening."

The issue involved a component failure on a service water pump. The plant was operating under normal conditions when control room indicators showed there was a change in the flow of water from one of the three service water pumps. Utility staff stopped the pump, investigated the problem and replaced all the coupling components. A coupling is a connector used to hold two pipes together. The plant is operating safely and has since started using the service water pump again.

The NRC's special inspection report documenting the team's findings will be issued within 45 days of the inspection's completion through the [AGENCY DOCUMENTS ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM](#) (ADAMS) at the NRC website.

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