



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ISSUES MID-CYCLE ASSESSMENTS FOR NATION'S NUCLEAR PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued mid-cycle assessment letters to the nation's 104 operating commercial nuclear power plants. The agency's most recent assessments show that all plants continue to operate safely.

"We ensure nuclear power plants are safe, inspecting them and rating their performance regularly, as part of our mission to protect people and the environment," said Troy Pruett, acting director for the division of inspection and regional support programs in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

In the mid-cycle assessment period that concluded on June 30, 99 of 104 plants were in the two highest performance categories. Ninety-one plants were performing at the highest level and are being inspected by NRC using the normal detailed level inspection program. Eight plants performed at the next highest level, needing to resolve one or two items of low safety significance, and will receive additional inspection and attention to follow up on corrective actions. These plants were: Brunswick 1 and 2 (N.C.); Byron 2 (Ill.); Cooper (Neb.); Ginna (N.Y.); Millstone 2 (Conn.); Prairie Island 1 (Minn.) and Turkey Point 4 (Fla.)

Three nuclear reactors were at the third level of performance with one degraded safety cornerstone and will receive more NRC inspections, senior management attention and oversight focused on the cause of the degraded performance. These plants were: H. B. Robinson 2 (S.C.); Perry 1 (Ohio) and Susquehanna 1 (Pa).

Two plants, Browns Ferry Unit 1 (Ala.) and Fort Calhoun (Neb.), require the NRC's highest level of attention, which will include additional inspections to confirm the plant's performance issues are being addressed.

In addition, mid-cycle letters were also sent to both the Watts Bar Unit 2 site, (Tenn.) and the Vogtle Unit 3 and 4 site (Ga.) reviewing activities associated with the early site permit and limited work authorized by the NRC.

Note that some plants' ratings may have changed since the last day of the assessment period. As of today, Robinson 2 has resolved the performance issues and has transitioned from the third level to the second level of performance. Brunswick Units 1 and 2, and Turkey Point Unit 4 have resolved their issues that caused the increased regulatory oversight. All three units have since transitioned to the highest performing level.

The NRC routinely provides changes to information on each plant's current performance and posts the latest information as it becomes available to the [action matrix summary](#), and the copy of the operating reactor's [mid-cycle assessment letters](#) sent to each licensee can be found on the NRC website. The Vogtle 3 and 4 and Watts Bar 2 mid-cycle assessment letters are available in the agency's electronic document system on the NRC website, [ADAMS](#), under accession number ML112440182 and ML112440649, respectively. Help in using ADAMS is available by contacting the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at pdr.resource@nrc.gov.

The lessons being learned from events at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station have prompted a comprehensive NRC review of our regulations and practices. The NRC will apply the recommendations from this review, as appropriate, for any changes deemed necessary to improve the safety of operating plants. Results of these activities can be found on the [Japan nuclear activities Web page](#).

Every six months each plant receives either a mid-cycle review letter or an annual assessment letter, along with an NRC inspection plan. The next annual assessment letters will be issued in March 2012.

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