



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES YELLOW AND WHITE INSPECTION FINDINGS TO BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT REGARDING FIRE PROTECTION ISSUES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has made a final determination on two inspection findings at the Browns Ferry nuclear power plant related to fire protection. One is "yellow," meaning the issue has substantial safety significance and the other is "white," indicating an issue of low to moderate safety significance. The findings will result in additional NRC inspections and potentially other NRC actions. The three-unit Browns Ferry plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, is located near Athens, Ala., 32 miles west of Huntsville

The NRC staff originally identified three apparent violations related to fire protection and a conference with TVA was held Feb. 22. During that meeting, TVA described its assessment of the significance of the findings, its root cause evaluations and corrective actions. TVA also offered their view that the two violations involving the failure to take adequate measures to protect equipment in the event of a fire were similar and should be combined.

After considering the information from the conference, and additional information supplied after the conference, the NRC staff has concluded that those two violations could be combined into one and that the significance of that finding was determined to be "yellow." The other finding, related to procedures for combating a plant fire, was determined to be "white."

Under the NRC reactor oversight process, inspection findings are evaluated using a significance determination process and assigned a color indicating its safety significance. Findings with very low safety significance are labeled "green." "White" findings have low to moderate safety significance, "yellow" findings have substantial safety significance, and "red" findings have high safety significance.

"Protecting vital plant systems and components from fire and having workable procedures for fire response is critical to nuclear safety," said NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes. "We expect all nuclear plants to meet NRC fire protection regulations and will take the necessary steps to ensure they do so."

The NRC staff will determine the most appropriate response and notify TVA later of any additional inspections, meetings or other activities the agency may plan. TVA has 30 days to respond to the NRC's letter detailing the findings.

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