



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC CONDUCTING SPECIAL INSPECTION AT WOLF CREEK NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection at the Wolf Creek Generating Station to review the circumstances surrounding complications with a plant cooling system pump. The incident did not affect public safety and the plant is currently operating at full power. Wolf Creek, operated by the Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corp., is located about three miles north of Burlington, Kan.

Two NRC inspectors, who began their work today, will evaluate the events and circumstances surrounding complications that first arose during testing of a component cooling water system pump on May 24. During subsequent testing on June 1, operators discovered pockets of nitrogen gas trapped in the system. The system is used to cool some safety-related and non-safety related components in the plant and acts to transfer heat from one cooling system to another to maintain safe operations.

“The purpose of this special inspection is to better understand the presence of nitrogen pockets and the implications of the condition on system operability,” said Region IV Administrator, Elmo E. Collins.

The NRC inspectors will develop a chronology of the event, review the licensee’s root cause determination, and evaluate the licensee’s maintenance and testing program and the effectiveness of operators’ response to the event. The inspection report documenting their findings will be publicly available within 45 days of the end of the inspection.

Nuclear plant performance is assessed by a combination of objective performance indicators reported by the licensee and by NRC inspection findings that are part of the reactor oversight process. Wolf Creek is currently in a category requiring additional oversight and inspections.

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