



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT BRAIDWOOD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a special inspection team to the Braidwood Nuclear Power Plant to review the circumstances surrounding the dual unit shutdowns that occurred on August 16. The incident did not affect public health and safety and both units remain safely shut down. The plant is operated by Exelon Generating Company LLC and is located in Braceville, Ill., 20 miles southwest of Joliet.

“The purpose of the special inspection is to better understand the sequence of both reactor events and the apparent unexpected system interactions,” said NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius.

The four-member team will evaluate the events and circumstances surrounding the shutdowns and subsequent equipment issues. Initial special inspection activities began with a team member the same day of the shutdowns. Unit 2 shut down due to a main generator fault. All systems operated as expected except one of the valves which control water flow to one steam generator. Specifically the valve became stuck in an open position, preventing the operator from using this valve to control water flow and caused the operator to use a backup valve. Approximately 13 minutes later Unit 1 also shut down, due to a loss of a secondary cooling system which helps cool a primary water system in the plant. This created a steam release and a loud noise which could be heard by residents living near the plant. The steam contained low levels of tritium which appear to be lower than the regulatory limits for the public.

Both NRC resident inspectors stationed onsite and regional experts have been closely following the events and actions taken by the utility.

The NRC special inspection team will review issues such as the chronology and causes of events, the circumstances surrounding the shutdowns, and the utility’s dose calculations of tritiated steam. The inspection report documenting the team’s findings will be publically available within 45 days after the completion of the inspection.

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