



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## **NRC STARTS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR PLANT TO EVALUATE ISSUES REGARDING UNIT 2 UNPLANNED SHUTDOWN**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a Special Inspection at the Susquehanna nuclear power plant to review issues associated with an unplanned shutdown of the Unit 2 reactor on Dec. 19. The inspection got under way today at the plant, which is located in Salem Township (Luzerne County), Pa., and operated by PPL.

The three-member Special Inspection Team will be tasked with evaluating the circumstances surrounding the Dec. 19 shutdown, when the reactor was at 18 percent power as it was returning to service from an automatic shutdown that took place on Dec. 16. Among other things, the inspectors will independently assess operator performance and management oversight; the company's review of the event; and actions taken as a result of its review.

The inspectors' work will build on earlier reviews done by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to Susquehanna and by specialist inspectors who responded to the site immediately after the event. The inspectors reviewed the adequacy of PPL's immediate corrective actions to address equipment and operator performance issues prior to plant restart on Dec. 26.

A problem involving the feedwater system, which is normally used to supply water to the reactor vessel for steam production, was the cause of the Dec. 19 shutdown. Specifically, all feedwater flow was temporarily lost when a valve failed to open as expected during plant startup.

"While the most recent shutdown did not present any immediate safety concerns for the public or plant workers, it was preceded by unplanned reactor shutdowns on Nov. 9 and Dec. 16," NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. "Collectively, the shutdowns raise questions regarding operator performance, equipment reliability and, in the most recent event, decision-making. This inspection is warranted to further the NRC's understanding of these issues and the company's actions to address them."

The NRC will issue a report on the results of the Special Inspection within 45 days of its completion.

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