



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS ON MARCH 21st IN BERWICK, PA., TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR PLANT AND RESULTS OF RECENT SUPPLEMENTAL INSPECTION

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, March 21, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Susquehanna nuclear power plant during 2011.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. at the Eagle Building, at 107 S. Market St. in Berwick, Pa. Prior to the session's conclusion, there will be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of the NRC staff regarding the plant's performance, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

A second meeting, which will be held at the same location, will start at 7 p.m. and discuss the results of a supplemental inspection conducted during the weeks of Feb. 13 and 27 at the plant. That team inspection evaluated the actions taken by the facility's owner, PPL, in response to a "White" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding and a "White" Performance Indicator at Susquehanna Unit 1. The NRC conducted the inspection to evaluate whether PPL fully understands the root causes of the associated problems and has implemented sufficient corrective actions to address them.

The Susquehanna plant, which is located in Salem Township (Luzerne County), Pa., is the site of two boiling-water reactors.

"Among plants overseen by the NRC's Region I Office, Susquehanna Unit 1 was the only unit listed in the 'Degraded Cornerstone' Column of our Action Matrix, which dictates our level of oversight for each plant," NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. "Consistent with that fact, we are continuing to devote additional inspection resources to the plant until we are satisfied the issues that led to the designation of 'Degraded Cornerstone' have been fully addressed."

Overall, the Susquehanna Unit 1 and 2 reactors operated safely during 2011. For Susquehanna Unit 2, as assessed through the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, there were no inspection findings that were "Greater than Green" (rising to the level requiring additional NRC oversight) or any performance indicators that were other than "Green" (exceeding the threshold for the indicator and requiring additional NRC oversight). Therefore, for the remainder of 2012, Unit 2 will receive the normal, very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well.

However, Susquehanna Unit 1 had a "White" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding during 2010, and that finding remains open. The finding stems from an internal flooding event at the plant on July 16, 2010, which required plant operators to manually shut down the reactor.

The NRC is also continuing to apply additional oversight to Susquehanna Unit 1 due to a performance indicator that changed to "White" in 2011. The performance indicator covers Unplanned Scrams (or shutdowns) per 7,000 Hours of Online Operation. This means that if a plant experiences more than three unplanned scrams during the previous 7,000 hours of operation, the performance indicator will transition from "Green" to "White". Susquehanna Unit 1 crossed that threshold at the end of the first quarter of 2011. That performance indicator, combined with the "White" inspection finding, placed the unit in the "Degraded Cornerstone Column" of the NRC's [Action Matrix](#).

In addition, the NRC will continue to monitor efforts by PPL to address substantive cross-cutting issues at Susquehanna in the areas of human resources and problem identification and resolution. The plant had four inspection findings in the human resources area in 2011 and six inspection findings involving the facility's problem identification and resolution programs.

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with "Green" and then increase to "White," "Yellow" or "Red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year: During the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC's [website](#) each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The meetings are in keeping with the agency's commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The [annual assessment](#) for the Susquehanna plant is available on the NRC website. The notices for the meetings are available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System ([ADAMS](#)) under accession numbers ML12066A064 and ML12066A077. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@nrc.gov.

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency's Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa.

Among the areas of performance at Susquehanna to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, emergency preparedness and the plant's implementation of an industry initiative to address the potential degradation of underground piping.

Current performance information for [Susquehanna Unit 1](#) and [Susquehanna Unit 2](#) is available on the NRC website.

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NOTE: Anyone wishing to take photos or use a camera to record any portion of a NRC meeting should contact the Office of Public Affairs beforehand.

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