



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO MEET WITH PPL REGARDING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENTS AT SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of PPL on Tuesday, Oct. 16 to discuss the company's progress on improvements in the areas of corrective actions and human performance at the Susquehanna nuclear power plant. PPL owns and operates the twin-reactor plant, which is located in Salem Township (Luzerne County), Pa.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. at the Susquehanna Energy Information Center, at 634 Salem Blvd. 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.

In the NRC's 2012 Mid-Cycle (mid-year) Assessment Letter for Susquehanna, issued on Sept. 4, the agency reported that there continues to be a substantive cross-cutting issue involving the plant's corrective action program. The issue was first identified in the 2011 Mid-Cycle Assessment Letter for the plant. A substantive cross-cutting issue results when there is a trend in a certain aspect of performance for which the NRC has a concern. Specifically, the NRC has reported a number of inspection findings over the past two years associated with the company's evaluation of identified problems. The issue remains open because PPL had not demonstrated sustained improvement in this area at the time of the NRC's last assessment.

The NRC has also continued to identify a second substantive cross-cutting issue, this one in the area of human performance. Specifically, there have been a number of inspection findings over the past 18 months involving procedures. For example, a maintenance and testing procedure lacked sufficient technical details and resulted in an unexpected plant shutdown during turbine testing. The issue was first identified in the agency's 2011 Annual Assessment Letter for Susquehanna. Because there is not yet evidence of effective implementation of an appropriate corrective action plan in that area, the issue remains open.

At the meeting on Oct. 16, the NRC plans to discuss with PPL its assessment of:

- the causal factors associated with the two substantive cross-cutting issues

- the implementation, effectiveness and timeliness of corrective actions to address the issues
- plans to use a safety culture assessment at the plant in 2013 to gain further insights into the issues.

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