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NRC CONDUCTING SPECIAL INSPECTION AT BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is conducting a special inspection at the Browns Ferry nuclear plant to assess the circumstances surrounding degradation of several valves on the residual heat removal or RHR systems for Unit 3. The Browns Ferry plant is located near Athens, Ala., and is operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The RHR system is designed to control the temperature of the reactor coolant system by removing decay heat during shutdowns and refueling operations. In March, TVA found significant degradation of RHR heat exchanger service water flow control valves on Unit 3.

“This inspection is being conducted to identify what caused the degradation and to review TVA’s evaluations of the issue and the corrective actions,” said NRC Region II Acting Administrator Victor McCree. “It’s important that we verify that interim corrective actions are adequate until final solutions are implemented.”

The NRC decided a special inspection was warranted because of the importance of the valves, the common nature of the degradation and the inability of current surveillance tests to detect the degraded condition.

The inspection began Monday, April 28, and is expected to take several days. A report will be issued about 30 days after the completion of the inspection and will be available at that time on the agency’s website at: www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html .

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