



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE AT BRUNSWICK NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Progress Energy officials on Monday, April 23, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the two-unit Brunswick nuclear power plant, located near Southport in southeastern North Carolina.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. in the Brunswick Media Center Auditorium near the entrance to the plant site. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Brunswick plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region II Administrator William Travers said. "This meeting is a chance for us to discuss that safety performance with the company, with local officials and with people living near the plant."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/bru_2006q4.pdf.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," depending on the safety significance of the issues involved.

The NRC said the Brunswick plant operated safely during 2006, but performance during the second, third and fourth quarters was in the NRC's regulatory response column, based on a "white" performance indicator related to the Mitigating Systems Performance Index, Emergency AC Power System. This performance indicator crossed the green (very low safety significance) to white (low to moderate safety significance) threshold in the second quarter of 2006 due to issues associated with availability and reliability of emergency diesel generators. The details are available in the letter mentioned above. The NRC has completed a supplemental inspection related to this performance indicator.

Currently, the NRC is reviewing another concern related to the emergency diesel generators that might impact the NRC assessment for the first quarter of 2007. This concern was discussed with Progress Energy at a regulatory conference held in Atlanta earlier this month. The NRC will discuss the status of this concern and the NRC's overall assessment of Brunswick at this performance meeting.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC resident inspectors assigned to the Brunswick plant and by inspection specialists from the Region II office in Atlanta and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md.

Current information for the Brunswick plant is available on the NRC web site at:
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BRU1/bru1_chart.html and
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BRU2/bru2_chart.html .

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