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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has initiated a special inspection at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Station to look into a situation in which plant operators did not follow procedures while starting up the reactor on May 17.

The plant, owned and operated by Dominion Energy Kewaunee Inc. at Kewaunee, Wisc., had been shut down since April 26 for equipment repairs.

The operators were performing reactor startup using a recently revised procedure.

While performing startup, the operators encountered an apparent problem with the sequence of steps in the procedure. The senior reactor operator in charge of the operating crew made changes to the procedure sequence and continued with the startup.

Subsequent to the startup, the licensee identified apparent errors in performing the procedure. The licensee evaluated plant conditions and continued the startup activities.

The licensee has implemented actions to investigate what happened during reactor startup.

The changes made to the procedure did not result in the operators taking unsafe actions. However, both the NRC and the licensee have questions concerning the adequacy of operator actions and the licensee's approved procedures.

The NRC inspectors will review the circumstances surrounding the incident, including the licensee's review of the operators' actions, the logic of the startup procedure itself, and the reason for the procedure change.

The special inspection team will issue its report about 30-45 days after the completion of the inspection. The report will be available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs or in the agency's online document library at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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