



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS IN-DEPTH, THREE-PART INSPECTION AT PERRY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun the first of a broad three-part inspection to assess activities at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant as part of its heightened oversight of the plant as a result of past problems with safety system equipment. The plant, operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co., is in Perry, Ohio.

The eight-person team began the first of two weeks onsite today (Jan. 10) and will return to the plant Jan. 24 for the second week. The team is focusing on the utility's corrective action program – how it finds, evaluates, and fixes problems. In addition to the NRC inspectors, there are observers from the State of Ohio and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

“The Perry plant continues to operate safely,” said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. “However, the NRC has increased its oversight of the Perry plant because of previous equipment problems. This extensive inspection will provide the agency with important insights into plant operations and the effectiveness of FirstEnergy’s performance improvement initiatives.”

The second part of the broad inspection is scheduled for late February or early March to review activities during the plant’s refueling outage.

The third part of the inspection, planned for April and early May, will involve a team of 8 to 10 inspectors for three weeks of onsite inspection. This team will focus on operating procedures, staff and management performance, engineering, and emergency planning. The team will also review the progress of the FirstEnergy performance improvement plan for Perry.

In August of last year, the NRC announced it was increasing scrutiny over the Perry plant as a result of several equipment problems which occurred during the period October 2002 through May 2004. The NRC found that these problems were of “low to moderate safety significance” and, in two of the instances, the utility had not taken adequate corrective action initially to resolve the problems.

Reports of each part of the inspection will be issued about 45 days after the conclusion of the inspection. The report will be publicly available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System, or ADAMS, at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Use Docket Number 05000440 to locate the reports. Help in using ADAMS is available from the NRC Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209.

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