



NRC NEWS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE AT CATAWBA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff are scheduled to meet with Duke Energy officials March 22, to discuss the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Catawba nuclear power plant, located near York, S. C. The period covered is the calendar year 2004.

The 1 p.m. meeting at the Rock Hill, S. C., City Hall, is open to public observation. Before the session ends, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

"Each year the NRC staff rates the performance of the Catawba plant and all of the nation's other commercial nuclear power plants," NRC Region II Administrator William Travers said. "This meeting gives us a chance to discuss our assessment with the company, with local officials and with residents near the plant. Our aim is to make this information available to the public and answer any questions people may have about our oversight."

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/cat_2004q4.pdf.

Overall, the Catawba plant operated safely during 2004. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Because all inspection findings and performance indicators for the plant during 2004 were classified as "green," Catawba will receive the baseline, or normal, level of inspections during 2005.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region II Office in Atlanta, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. In addition to the baseline inspections in 2005, the NRC plans to inspect activities related to a planned spent fuel storage installation, safety inspections concerning pressurizer penetration and steam space piping connections, and operator licensing examinations.

Current information for the two Catawba units is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/CAT1/cat1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/CAT2/cat2_chart.html.

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