



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT MILLSTONE UNIT 3 NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection into an April 17th shutdown of the Millstone Unit 3 nuclear power plant that led to the declaration of an “Alert,” the second-lowest of four levels of emergency classification. The inspection was initiated today at the plant, which is located in Waterford, Conn., and operated by Dominion Resources.

Consisting of four full-time and three part-time inspectors, the NRC team will be tasked with evaluating the circumstances surrounding the event. The review will, among other things: independently review the initiating cause(s), including any relation to previous maintenance, equipment issues or precursor events; independently evaluate equipment performance deficiencies and operator response during the event; and assess compliance with the plant’s technical specifications and emergency action level entry conditions. Dominion’s root cause analysis report will also be reviewed by the NRC team once it becomes available.

An inspector from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is expected to participate in the inspection as an observer.

At 8:29 a.m. on April 17, the Millstone Unit 3 reactor experienced an automatic shutdown from full power. The event also involved the activation of one of two safety subsystems. As the reactor was shutting down, multiple steam line safety valves lifted and at least one main steam safety valve appeared to remain open. It was the failure of the valve to reclose that resulted in the declaration of an Alert at 8:42 a.m.

Initial NRC response to the event involved headquarters and regional staff, including the agency’s on-site inspectors for Millstone, who monitored the shutdown of the plant. Regional staff and the on-site inspectors continued to monitor activities to place the reactor in its current “cold” shutdown condition.

No injuries resulted from the event and preliminary evaluations indicate there were no releases of radioactivity above allowable levels.

The team will document its findings and conclusions in a report to be issued within 45 days after an exit meeting with company officials at the end of the inspection.

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