



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS IN TENNESSEE JUNE 12 ON CHANGES IN REACTOR OVERSIGHT AND LATEST ASSESSMENT OF WATTS BAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has scheduled two public meetings for Monday, June 12 -- one on the latest performance review results for the Tennessee Valley Authority's Watts Bar nuclear power plant, and the other meeting on the NRC's reactor oversight process.

The first meeting will be held at 10 a.m. EDT at the Watts Bar Training Center at the plant site near Spring City, Tennessee. During the meeting, NRC staff members will discuss Watts Bar's latest plant performance review results, and will be available after the meeting to answer any questions from media or members of the public.

The Plant Performance Reviews are used to evaluate safety performance information and identify any changes in plant performance so the NRC can allocate inspection resources appropriately. The text of each PPR letter, including the one on Watts Bar, is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs and has been posted on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr.

Current performance information for the Watts Bar plant is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/WB1/wb1_chart.html.

The second meeting will begin at 7 p.m. EDT in the Rhea County Courthouse, 3rd Floor Chancery Courtroom, 1475 Market Street, Dayton Tennessee. NRC officials will describe the new oversight process which began at the Watts Bar plant in April. Members of the public will have the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting.

The new oversight process uses more objective, timely, and safety-significant criteria in assessing performance, while seeking to more effectively and efficiently regulate the industry. Under the new process, inspections by NRC resident inspectors and regional office-based personnel are supplemented by statistical measures of plant activities called performance indicators. These performance indicators measure important safety aspects of plant operations, including the viability of redundant safety systems, emergency planning, radiation protection, and security measures.

Inspection findings and performance indicators for each nuclear power plant are posted on the NRC's web site every three months. The safety significance of each inspection finding or performance indicator is characterized by a color -- green, white, yellow, or red.

The NRC response to the inspection findings and performance indicators will be based on the significance of the items. A green finding receives normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red

assessments receive increasing NRC involvement. Multiple red findings could result in a plant shutdown.

A plain language summary of the reactor oversight process is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs or on the web site at: **www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm**.

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