



NRC NEWS

**U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION III**

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630)829-9663/e-mail: rjs2@nrc.gov
Pam Alloway-Mueller (630)829-9662/e-mail: pla@nrc.gov

NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS JULY 11 IN MICHIGAN ON LATEST ASSESSMENT OF PALISADES NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AND CHANGES IN REACTOR OVERSIGHT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold two public meetings in Michigan on July 11 to discuss the latest performance review results for the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant in Covert, Michigan, and the NRC's new reactor oversight process. The plant is operated by Consumers Energy Corp.

NRC officials have scheduled a 2 p.m. EDT meeting to discuss Palisades' latest plant performance review results. The meeting will be held at the Palisades Training Center, 27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway.

The Plant Performance Reviews (PPRs) are an interim measure the NRC has used to assess nuclear power plant safety while the new reactor oversight process was being developed. The primary purpose of the PPRs is 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 Palisades, is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs and has been posted at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr> on the NRC web site.

NRC staff members, at 7 p.m. EDT July 11, will describe the new oversight program which began at Palisades in April. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Express, 1741 Phoenix Road in South Haven, Michigan. 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. It also takes into account improvements in the performance of the nuclear industry over the past twenty years.

Under the new oversight program, 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 internet web site every three months. The safety significance of each inspection finding or performance indicator is assessed with a color coding -- green, white, yellow, or red.

The NRC response to the inspection findings and performance indicators will be based on the assessment. A green finding would receive normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments would receive increasing NRC involvement. Multiple red findings could result in a plant shutdown.

Current performance information for the country's nuclear power plants is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/index.html>

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

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