



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO MEET WITH NUCLEAR MANAGEMENT CO. TO DISCUSS SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE ISSUE AT POINT BEACH PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet June 25 in Lisle, Illinois, with representatives of Nuclear Management Company to discuss the safety significance of an inadequate critique of two issues during an emergency preparedness exercise at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Station. The two-reactor facility is located near Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

The NRC staff has completed a preliminary assessment of the problem and concluded that it is of "low to moderate" safety significance. The meeting, called a Regulatory Conference, will seek the utility's evaluation of its significance.

The meeting will be held at 10 a.m. (CDT) in the NRC's Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle. Visitors should report to the Second Floor reception area. The public is invited to observe the business portion of the meeting and will have an opportunity to ask questions of the NRC staff before the meeting is adjourned.

NRC inspectors determined that the Point Beach staff offered inadequate critiques of two issues during an emergency preparedness exercise held on February 12. In the first instance, Point Beach staff offered a positive evaluation of participants' Protective Action Recommendation (PAR) to offsite government officials, while the NRC inspectors identified questions the staff's critique had not properly evaluated. In the second instance, NRC inspectors disagreed with the Point Beach staff's positive evaluation of the participants' decision making on the simulated removal of non-essential personnel, who were not members of the current shift of emergency responders, from the site.

Emergency preparedness exercises are held to identify performance and procedural deficiencies through a critique process to ensure that corrective action takes place before these problems can occur during an actual emergency and have an adverse reaction on public health and safety. To make safety drills effective, the plant staff's critiques of emergency preparedness drills must be thorough and self-critical.

Under its safety significance determination process, NRC officials classify certain conditions at nuclear power plants as being one of four colors which delineate increasing levels of safety significance, beginning with green and progressing to white, yellow or red.

The NRC's preliminary evaluation determined the Point Beach emergency exercise evaluation problem to be a "white" finding. Information presented by the utility in the Regulatory Conference will be used by the NRC staff, along with its inspection findings, to determine the final safety significance of the problem.

"White" inspection findings can lead to additional NRC inspections.

The details of the NRC inspection findings are discussed in Inspection Report 2002-04 which is available online in the NRC's electronic reading room. This report -- with the accession number ML021210488 -- may be viewed in the NRC's ADAMS document system, accessible at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The final significance determination will be available on the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html/reactors>.

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