



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO MEET WITH FIRSTENERGY TO DISCUSS PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF SPECIAL INSPECTION ON WORKER EXPOSURES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting on October 16 in Oak Harbor, Ohio, to discuss preliminary findings and observations from the NRC special inspection into an incident at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station, which resulted in offsite contamination and worker radiation exposure. The plant, operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company is located at Oak Harbor, Ohio.

The inspection focused on the offsite contamination aspects of the incident, as well as on worker dose and radiological work planning at the plant.

The meeting will be held at 9 a.m. (EDT) at the Davis-Besse Administration Building, 5503 North State Route 2. The public is invited to observe the meeting and will have the opportunity to make comments and ask questions of the NRC staff before the meeting is adjourned.

On March 22, representatives of the Oconee nuclear power station in South Carolina notified the Davis-Besse officials that discrete radioactive particles had been found on a sleeve of a contract worker, who had last worked at Davis-Besse. Subsequently, FirstEnergy performed an investigation into the incident and identified four other workers, who had been performing repairs on the steam generators at Davis-Besse and may have carried discrete radioactive particles off site. Davis-Besse personnel identified low levels of radioactive contamination in South Carolina and Virginia.

The NRC initiated a special inspection focusing on how microscopic radioactive particles were carried off the Davis-Besse site on the clothing of these workers, who were employed by a contractor conducting activities at the Davis-Besse plant. Isolated, low-levels of radioactive contamination were subsequently found in Ohio and Texas, in addition to South Carolina and Virginia. The steam generator work was not related to the reactor vessel head damage discovered at the plant in early March.

During its ongoing review of the incident, the NRC staff raised questions in August with FirstEnergy about the level of radiation exposure of the workers involved with the steam generator work.

The NRC concluded that additional data was needed to make a final determination on the dose received by the workers and has expanded its inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the radiation exposures received by workers at the Davis-Besse plant. The NRC also arranged for an independent radiation dose assessment by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education.

The inspection was expanded on September 30 and a team of five NRC inspectors went to Davis-Besse to gather information on work planning, the precautions taken during the steam generator work, the measurements of radioactive contamination received by the workers at the time, and the radiation dose received as a result of inhalation or ingestion of radioactive material by the workers.

After the NRC completes its analysis, a report detailing the findings of both special inspections will become publicly available on the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/vessel-head-degradation.html>.

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