



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2007 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR FERMI NUCLEAR POWER PLANT UNIT 2

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Detroit Edison Co. Wednesday, April 9, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Fermi Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located in Newport, Mich.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. EDT at Monroe County Board of Commissioners' Chambers, County Courthouse, 125 E. Second St., Monroe. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment, talk about the NRC and its range of activities, and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Fermi plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and area residents. Our goal is to explain how the NRC works and make sure as much information as possible is available on our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at:

http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/ferm_2007q4.pdf

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Fermi plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Fermi during 2007 were determined to be “green.” As a result of this performance, the NRC will conduct the normal, baseline level of inspections during the upcoming year.

The NRC letter to the utility identified a substantive cross-cutting issue in the area of human performance. The issue is referred to as “cross-cutting” because it affects multiple areas of plant performance. The letter discussed 14 inspection findings whose root causes were associated with the cross-cutting issue of human performance.

Five of these findings were associated with deficiencies in plant procedures. Five additional findings were associated with the plant employees’ failures to adhere to existing plant procedures.

The NRC’s letter to the utility expressed concern with the plants ability to follow work instructions and follow established procedures.

The letter also recognized the plants recent corrective actions to address the cross cutting issue in the area of human performance. However more time is required to evaluate the effectiveness of the plants efforts. The NRC will continue to monitor the plants implementation of the proposed corrective actions.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness, radiation protection, and reactor system operations.

Current performance information for Fermi is available on the NRC’s web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FERM2/ferm2_chart.html.

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