



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ANNUAL ASSESSMENT FOR SALEM, HOPE CREEK NUCLEAR PLANTS TO BE DISCUSSED AT PUBLIC MEETING ON APRIL 30 IN SWEDESBORO, N.J.

The results of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual safety performance assessment for the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants will be the subject of a public meeting on Wednesday, April 30. The Salem 1 and 2 reactors and the Hope Creek reactor are co-located in Hancocks Bridge (Salem County), N.J., and operated by PSEG.

At 6 p.m., NRC staff will meet with representatives of PSEG Nuclear, LLC, to discuss the assessment, which covers the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2007, and was documented in a March 3rd letter to the company. The session will take place at the Holiday Inn Select-Bridgeport, off Exit 10 of Interstate 295 in Swedesboro, N.J.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's performance during 2007, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

"Through a combination of inspection findings and performance indicators, we are able to develop a comprehensive picture of how nuclear power plants are performing with regard to safety," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "As part of our commitment to make the findings of our reviews accessible to the public, we hold meetings near each plant once a year to share the details of those assessments. We look forward to the opportunity on April 30th to present that information for the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants."

The annual assessment letter for the Salem plants is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/salm_2007q4.pdf. The annual assessment letter for the Hope Creek plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/hope_2007q4.pdf. The notice for the meeting, with agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML081021052. ADAMS is accessible at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS is

available via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV.

Overall, the Salem and Hope Creek plants operated safely during 2007. When considering nuclear power plant performance, the NRC uses color-coded performance indicators and inspection findings. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

At the conclusion of last year, there were no performance indicators for Salem Unit 2 or Hope Creek that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green." Therefore, those units will receive the baseline, or routine, level of inspections for the remainder of 2008.

Salem Unit 1, meanwhile, had a "yellow" Performance Indicator resulting from one of the facility's emergency diesel generators failing to start in the fourth quarter of 2007 and, during previous quarters, one instance in which an emergency diesel generator failed to run and one in which an emergency diesel generator failed to start. Emergency diesel generators provide backup power in the event of an off-site power loss; the Salem Unit 1 and 2 reactors are each equipped with three of the generators.

Because of the "yellow" indicator, Salem Unit 1 will receive additional NRC oversight this year in the form of a supplemental inspection. The inspection will be conducted to provide the agency with assurance that the root and contributing causes for the issue are understood, and so that the NRC can independently assess whether similar issues exist and if appropriate steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence.

Also, the NRC's mid-year assessment letter for the Salem units identified a substantive cross-cutting issue pertaining to procedural compliance. (A cross-cutting issue is one that touches on several areas of plant performance.) The letter stated the issue would be cleared once PSEG demonstrated sustainable performance improvement in that area. The company did take steps in 2007 to address the issue, including a root-cause evaluation and the reinforcement of standards. However, there has not been a notable reduction in related inspection findings. Therefore, the substantive cross-cutting issue will remain open for now. The NRC will monitor the company's progress in this area through routine inspections in 2008.

Routine inspections are carried out by the four NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency's Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at the Salem and Hope Creek plants to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, emergency preparedness and operator licensing. In addition, the NRC will review activities related to the power uprate proposed for the Hope Creek plant, the initial loading of dry cask storage units for spent nuclear fuel at Hope Creek, and the replacement of the steam generators at Salem Unit 2 during that plant's spring 2008 refueling outage.

Current performance information for Salem 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SALM1/salm1_chart.html. Current

performance information for Salem 2 is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SALM2/salm2_chart.html . Current
performance information for Hope Creek is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HOPE/hope_chart.html .

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