



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406
E-mail: opal@nrc.gov
Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

NRC TO DISCUSS INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR PLANT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AT PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR JULY 2 IN CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y.

The results of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual safety performance assessment for the Indian Point nuclear power plant will be the subject of a public meeting on Wednesday, July 2. Indian Point is located in Buchanan, N.Y., and operated by Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.

At 6:30 p.m., NRC staff will meet with representatives of Entergy 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 meeting will take place at the Colonial Terrace, 119 Oregon Road in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. Prior to the conclusion of the formal 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.

The NRC staff will also conduct an informational poster-board session for interested members of the public in conjunction with the meeting. That session will run from 4 to 6 p.m. in a room adjacent to the main meeting room at the same location.

"Through a combination of NRC inspection findings and plant 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. "At Indian Point, in addition to our comprehensive Reactor Oversight Program, we have conducted reviews of groundwater contamination, alert and notification system upgrades, and Entergy's license renewal application. We have also continued to supplement our NRC Resident Inspector on-site staffing with four engineers compared to two for a typical two-unit site. As part of our continuing commitment to make the findings of our reviews accessible to the public, we hold meetings near each plant to share the details of those assessments. On July 2nd, we will present the annual assessment results for Indian Point."

The annual assessment letter for Indian Point has been issued and is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/inpt_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 ML081500780. 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 800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV.

Overall, Indian Point Units 2 and 3 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.

As of the last quarter of 2007, there were no performance indicators for Indian Point Units 2 and 3 that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green."

Indian Point Unit 3 did have a single "white" (low to moderate safety significance) Performance Indicator, in the category of Unplanned Scrams per 7,000 Critical Hours, during the second quarter of 2007. That was due to Unit 3 experiencing more than three unplanned scrams, or shutdowns, during a period of 7,000 hours of operation. Because the Performance Indicator utilizes a rolling average, it returned to "green" as of the third quarter of 2007. However, in response to the "white" Performance Indicator, Unit 3 was subject to additional NRC oversight in the form of a supplemental team inspection. The NRC completed that inspection in April and determined that adequate corrective actions have either been implemented or are planned by Entergy to address the performance issues.

In the NRC's 2007 annual assessment letter for Indian Point, the agency advised Entergy of a substantive cross-cutting issue – an issue that touches on multiple areas of performance – in the area of human performance related to procedure adequacy. The 2008 annual assessment letter notes that last year there continued to be inspection findings attributable to procedure adequacy at both Indian Point units. While Entergy has taken steps to address the problems, the NRC has concluded that the criteria for closing out the substantive cross-cutting issue have not yet been met. The NRC, in response to the issue, asked Entergy to conduct an assessment of the safety culture at Indian Point. Once that assessment has been carried out, the agency will independently review the assessment and document the results in an inspection report.

The NRC also identified a substantive cross-cutting issue at Indian Point Unit 2 in the area of problem identification and resolution. Specifically, NRC inspectors found that Entergy had not implemented effective corrective actions for degraded containment building fan cooler units, adverse station battery resistances, adverse reliability of an on-site gas turbine-generator and inadequate monitoring of service water intake bay level. Further, the company has not sufficiently addressed the need to install the plant's new siren alert system in accordance with NRC orders.

Both substantive cross-cutting issues will be monitored by the NRC throughout 2008 via focused inspections in these areas as part of the agency's baseline inspection program. The issues will not be closed out until Entergy has demonstrated sustainable performance improvements.

In addition to reviews to be performed under the baseline inspection program, the NRC will continue additional oversight of Entergy's actions to address issues associated with on-site groundwater contamination and the installation and testing of the new alert siren system. A Deviation Memorandum approved on Dec. 19, 2007, by the agency's Executive Director for Operations authorized the additional inspection resources needed for these reviews.

Inspections are carried out by the four NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by specialists from the agency's Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at Indian Point to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, permanent plant modifications, emergency preparedness and the licensed operator requalification program. In addition, the NRC will inspect dry cask storage (of spent nuclear fuel) activities for both units, as well as the permanently shutdown Indian Point Unit 1.

Several public meetings have been conducted in the area of the plant this year to discuss the topics of license renewal and contaminated groundwater. In addition to the annual assessment meeting, a meeting on the alert and notification system sirens will be scheduled in the future.

Current performance information for Indian Point 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/IP2/ip2_chart.html. Current performance information for Indian Point 3 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/IP3/ip3_chart.html.

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