



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2008 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT JULY 21

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of FENOC Nuclear Operating Company on Wednesday, July 21, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the Perry Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located in Perry, Ohio, roughly 35 miles northeast of Cleveland.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. EDT at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites LaMalfa, 5783 Heisley Road, in Mentor, Ohio. 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 Perry plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius said. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and area residents. One of the NRC's main goals is to explain to people in the community how the agency regulates nuclear power plants."

A March 14 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/perr_2008q4.pdf

The NRC's assessment concluded that Perry operated safely in 2008. All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Perry during 2008 were determined to be "green." The agency uses a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors go from "green" to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

The NRC letter identifies a substantive cross-cutting issue in the area of human performance. This kind of issue refers performance deficiencies that cut across multiple areas of plant operation. Although these issues are not assigned safety significance, the NRC expects the problem to be corrected.

At Perry, the substantive cross-cutting issue is associated with work control, quality and adherence to procedures and the quality of documentation. The NRC letter also notes indications of an emerging weakness in the area of human error prevention techniques.

FENOC took steps to address these issues. "However, the effectiveness and sustainability of your corrective actions continue to be of concern," states the NRC letter.

At the NRC's request, FENOC will discuss the general measures it has taken to address the cross-cutting issue. A detailed written account describing FENOC'S specific actions to address this issue will follow. The cross-cutting issue in the area of human performance will remain open until the NRC gains confidence in the effectiveness and sustainability of the company's corrective actions.

The NRC will continue to conduct very detailed routine inspections at the plant. NRC inspectors will also continue to evaluate FENOC's efforts to correct human performance issues. Inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant, and inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are radiation protection, fire protection and emergency preparedness.

Current performance information for Perry is available on the NRC's Web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PERR1/perr1_chart.html.

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