



NRC NEWS

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NRC AUGMENTS INSPECTION AT ROBINSON NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has formed an Augmented Inspection Team to further review an automatic reactor trip, two fires in the plant's electrical systems and the plant operators' response to those events at the Robinson nuclear plant on Sunday, March 28.

An Alert was declared that evening at the Robinson plant, which is operated by Progress Energy near Hartsville, S.C., about 26 miles northwest of Florence. An Alert is the next to lowest NRC emergency classification for plant events, and the Robinson plant exited the Alert after about two and a half hours.

The plant remained shut down and entered a planned refueling outage early. The NRC dispatched a three-person special inspection team to the Robinson plant two days after the original events. Further review by the company and the NRC found additional deficiencies in operations which increased the overall risk and pointed to the need for additional inspection.

An Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) is formed by the NRC to review more significant events or issues at NRC-licensed facilities, and the Robinson AIT will expand the scope of the special inspection team sent to the site earlier. The AIT will include members of the special inspection team as well as five additional inspectors. The AIT will be led by NRC Region II Branch Chief Bob Haag and will officially begin work at the plant on Monday, April 19.

"The increased risk associated with these new issues makes an augmented inspection team the appropriate level of review," said NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes. "Upgrading the inspection to an AIT underscores our commitment to evaluate these issues thoroughly and ensure they are being properly addressed."

The AIT will hold an exit meeting with the company upon completion of the inspection to discuss its preliminary findings. That meeting will be open to interested members of the public and the news media, and team members will be available to answer questions after the results are presented. The AIT will also issue a written report 30 days after the completion of the inspection.

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