



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2009 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT JULY 28

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of FENOC Nuclear Operating Company on Wednesday, July 28, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the Perry Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located in Perry, Ohio, about 35 miles northeast of Cleveland.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. EDT at the Perry Township Community Building, 2800 Perry Park Rd., in Perry. 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 NRC's main goals is to explain to people in the community how the agency regulates nuclear power plants."

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/perr_2009q4.pdf.

The NRC utilizes 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's assessment concluded that Perry operated safely in 2009. All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Perry during 2009 were determined to be "green." Performance indicators are a statistical measurement of plant and equipment performance.

The NRC letter also addressed two substantive cross-cutting issues in the area of human performance and problem identification and resolution. Cross-cutting issues are issues that “cut across” multiple areas of plant operation. Examples of cross-cutting issues include problems associated with the plant staff’s ability to identify and correct problems, to develop effective procedures and to adhere to these procedures.

In Perry’s case, the human performance cross-cutting issue involves human errors made in work planning, practices and oversight. The NRC first identified the issue in early 2008. The plant implemented a plan to address these issues but the number of human performance issues remains high. The NRC has issued a request for the plant to conduct an independent safety culture assessment to help identify reasons for their inability to address the human performance issues, which should be completed by the end of 2010.

The letter also addressed the problem identification and resolution cross-cutting issue which involves the plant’s inability to properly evaluate, address and classify problems. The NRC identified this issue in September 2009. The agency remains concerned that a weakness in this particular area may also be a significant factor in the plant’s inability to correct the human performance issues. When a substantive cross-cutting issue is identified at a nuclear power plant, the NRC expects the problem to be corrected. The NRC has requested the plant to discuss their progress and plans to correct these issues during the upcoming meeting.

As a result of this performance, the NRC will continue to conduct the very detailed routine inspections for plants that are performing well. 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, emergency response and the identification and resolution of problems.

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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