



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO INCREASE OVERSIGHT OF ROBINSON NUCLEAR PLANT

The H.B. Robinson nuclear power plant will receive additional oversight from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as the result of a series of NRC inspection findings and plant issues. The Robinson plant is located near Hartsville, S.C., and operated by Progress Energy.

The increased oversight is linked to three “white” inspection findings, which have low to moderate safety significance, and a “white” performance indicator. Two of the “white” findings are related to a March 28, 2010, shutdown and two fires in the facility’s electrical systems. The third “white” finding, which also was issued in 2010, stemmed from problems with an emergency diesel generator. In addition, the plant reported a “white” performance indicator for an excessive number of unplanned reactor shutdowns last year.

The two most recent “white” findings involved the failure to adequately implement certain procedures required during the event last March and the failure to develop operator training that would have provided complete guidance for actions required during those events. Those findings are violations of NRC requirements and Progress Energy is required to respond to those violations.

“Overall, the Robinson plant continues to operate safely,” said NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree. “However, these findings point to performance issues and a trend that needs to be understood and addressed. The additional oversight by NRC is warranted based on the procedural and training shortcomings revealed by the March event.”

The additional NRC inspections will provide assurance that the root causes of the performance issues are understood and corrective actions are sufficient to prevent recurrence. The additional inspections have not yet been scheduled.

The NRC evaluates inspection findings and performance indicators at commercial nuclear power plants with a color-coded system which classifies them as green, white, yellow or red, in increasing order of safety significance. As the significance increases, the NRC heightens the level of oversight for that plant. If a plant takes appropriate corrective actions and improves safety performance, the agency returns to its normal, but still extensive, inspection schedule.

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