



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC MONITORING ALERT AT NORTH ANNA FOLLOWING VIRGINIA EARTHQUAKE

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission headquarters in Rockville, Md., is monitoring an Alert at the North Anna nuclear power plant in Virginia, following today's earthquake in central Virginia. The NRC is also monitoring Unusual Events, the lowest emergency classification, declared at several other Eastern U.S. nuclear power plants. In accordance with agency procedures, the NRC's regional offices in King of Prussia, Pa., and Atlanta have activated their incident response centers. NRC resident inspectors at the affected nuclear power plants will continue to monitor conditions for the duration of the event.

North Anna declared its Alert, the second-lowest of the NRC's four emergency classifications, when the plant lost electricity from the grid following the quake just before 2 p.m. Tuesday. Power is being provided by onsite diesel generators and the plant's safety systems are operating normally. Plant personnel and NRC resident inspectors are continuing to examine plant conditions.

NRC staff in the Maryland headquarters felt the quake and immediately began checking with U.S. nuclear power plants. The NRC is in direct communications with North Anna and is coordinating its response with other federal agencies.

Nuclear power plants are built to withstand environmental hazards, including earthquakes. Even those plants that are located outside of areas with extensive seismic activity are designed for safety in the event of such a natural disaster. The NRC requires that safety-significant structures, systems, and components be designed to take into account the most severe natural phenomena historically reported for the site and surrounding area.

Plants declaring Unusual Events, which indicate a potential decrease in plant safety, include Peach Bottom, Three Mile Island, Susquehanna and Limerick in Pennsylvania; Salem, Hope Creek and Oyster Creek in New Jersey, Calvert Cliffs in Maryland, Surry in Virginia, Shearon Harris in North Carolina and D.C. Cook and Palisades in Michigan. All these plants continue to operate while plant personnel examine their sites.

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