



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC CONTINUES TO ASSESS NORTH ANNA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT FOLLOWING VIRGINIA EARTHQUAKE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission continues to assess the North Anna nuclear power plant in Louisa, Va., as the plant recovers from Tuesday's earthquake, which was centered several miles from the plant.

North Anna canceled its emergency declaration as of 1:15 p.m. Wednesday. The plant had declared an Alert, the second-lowest of four emergency classifications, when it lost electricity from the grid following the quake just before 2 p.m. Tuesday. North Anna's onsite diesel generators provided power to the plant's safety systems until grid connections were restored at approximately 5:40 p.m. Tuesday; the safety systems continue to run as expected. The plant downgraded to an Unusual Event at approximately 11 a.m. Wednesday, before canceling its emergency declaration altogether.

North Anna is currently assessing the plant's normal operating systems and structures. The NRC's resident inspectors at the plant continue to observe the plant's activities and provide first-hand information to the agency. In light of the quake's strength and proximity to the plant, the NRC will soon decide whether to conduct a follow-up inspection, aimed at determining how the quake compares to what the plant was designed to withstand.

The NRC also contacted Eastern U.S. industrial and medical facilities that possess significant quantities of nuclear materials. All of these locations confirmed their materials are secure.

Twelve other Eastern U.S. nuclear power plants declared Unusual Events while they examined their sites following the quake. All 12 had canceled their event designations by Tuesday night and all continue to operate normally. These plants were: 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.

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.

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