



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NINE MILE POINT 1, FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL NRC OVERSIGHT

The Nine Mile Point 1 and James A. FitzPatrick nuclear power plants will receive additional oversight from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a result of a change in one of the indicators used by the NRC to assess performance at U.S. reactors. Both plants are located in Scriba, N.Y. Nine Mile Point 1 is owned and operated by Constellation Energy Nuclear Group, LLC, while FitzPatrick is owned and operated by Entergy Nuclear Northeast.

A combination of color-coded performance indicators and inspection findings is used by the NRC to evaluate plant performance. The colors start with “Green” and then increase to “White,” “Yellow” or “Red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. In the case of the performance indicators, they are updated on a quarterly basis as new plant data becomes available, with any changes reflected on the NRC’s web site at: www.nrc.gov.

Based on data compiled at the end of the fourth quarter of 2012 – and which has now been posted on the agency’s web site -- the Nine Mile Point 1 performance indicator for unplanned scrams, or shutdowns, per 7,000 hours of operation has changed. If a plant has more than three unplanned scrams during that period of time, the indicator transitions from “Green” to “White” and the plant is subjected to additional scrutiny from the NRC. At the end of 2012, the Nine Mile Point 1 rolling average for that indicator stood at 3.5.

With respect to the FitzPatrick plant, a different performance indicator has changed. That indicator tracks the number of unplanned power changes per 7,000 hours of operation. If that total exceeds six during that period of time, the indicator will move from “Green” to “White” and the NRC will step up its level of oversight. For FitzPatrick, that rolling average was tallied at 6.5 at the end of the fourth quarter of 2012.

“Performance indicators are designed to signal when there are trends at nuclear power plants in need of additional oversight by the NRC,” NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean. “We will follow our process and ensure that any of the underlying problems contributing to the Nine Mile Point 1 and FitzPatrick indicator changes receive the attention they deserve.”

Both plants have shifted from the Licensee Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix to the Regulatory Response Column. The Action Matrix is available at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html. The increased oversight that will result will include a supplemental inspection at each site to provide assurance the companies that operate the plants understand the reasons for the indicator changes and that the issues have been appropriately evaluated and addressed.

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