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NRC Accelerates Schedule for Earthquake Risk Analysis at U.S. Reactors

The NRC, after reviewing updated earthquake hazard information from all U.S. nuclear power plants, has [concluded](#) the plants can, where appropriate, complete in-depth analyses of their updated earthquake risk earlier than originally planned. In other cases, the NRC has concluded reactors no longer need to submit an in-depth analysis.

The NRC's comprehensive response to the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear accident included a request for all U.S. plants to re-analyze their earthquake hazards. The agency has reviewed the submittals, beginning with [Central and Eastern U.S.](#) plants in 2014, and then the [Western U.S.](#) plants earlier this year. The agency also considered insights from earlier probabilistic risk assessments related to seismic hazards. In addition, the agency reviewed the plants' evaluations on whether any interim measures are called for while they complete an in-depth risk analysis. The NRC continues to conclude U.S. reactors are safe to continue operating while they do more analysis where appropriate.

“Our substantial reviews have shown that fewer reactors than we first thought actually need the in-depth analysis,” said Bill Dean, director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. “This outcome means both the NRC and industry can better focus their seismic expertise to work on the plants most in need of additional analysis. We now expect the first in-depth risk analysis to be completed three months ahead of the original schedule, and the last ones potentially a year ahead of their original deadline.”

The NRC has concluded the plants have appropriately reviewed their [existing seismic protection](#). It is also worth noting that many U.S. reactors already comply with the NRC's March 2012 Orders for [additional safety equipment](#) and enhanced [spent fuel pool monitoring](#).

The updated submittal schedule covers the following plants:

Vogtle	3/31/17
Indian Point Unit 2	6/30/17
Watts Bar	6/30/17
Beaver Valley	9/30/17
Diablo Canyon	9/30/17
Callaway	12/31/17
Pilgrim	12/31/17
North Anna	3/31/18
Peach Bottom	3/31/18
D.C. Cook	6/30/18

Indian Point Unit 3	6/30/18
Summer	9/30/18
Oconee	12/31/18
Columbia	3/31/19
Robinson	3/31/19
Dresden	6/30/19
Catawba	9/30/19
Palisades	9/30/19
Browns Ferry	12/31/19
McGuire	12/31/19
Sequoyah	12/31/19

The NRC's letter regarding the submission schedule revision is [available](#) on the agency's website. The NRC's [blog](#) has several entries on the seismic re-evaluation process.