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NRC SENDS SPECIAL TEAM TO VERMONT YANKEE TO CHECK CIRCUMSTANCES OF SHUTDOWN

A Nuclear Regulatory Commission team has begun a special inspection at the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant power plant in Vernon, Vt., to look into the circumstances surrounding a shutdown Tuesday (June 9).

The plant's reactor protection system automatically shut down both the reactor and the turbine after receiving a signal of an abnormally high water level in the reactor vessel. Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. believes the apparent cause was a malfunctioning feedwater regulating valve. The initial response by plant equipment and personnel to the shutdown was as expected. No radiation was released because of the shutdown.

But a number of problems subsequently occurred: both a main feedwater pump and a recirculation pump motor generator shut down, and the main steam isolation valves closed. Vermont Yankee has begun an investigation.

The NRC team will review the causes, safety implications, and associated licensee actions. A written report of the team's findings will be publicly available about six weeks after the on-site portion of the inspection is completed this week.

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