



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION OF PUMP ISSUE AT THE POINT BEACH PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Station to look into a problem with a pump that led to a plant shutdown on June 14. The plant, operated by Nuclear Management Company, is located near Two Rivers, Wis.

On June 9, while plant operators were conducting a quarterly test on the Unit 1 turbine driven auxiliary feedwater pump, they received indications that the pump temperature was unusually high. However, plant personnel failed to recognize the increasing temperature as a potential problem and no immediate action was taken to address the irregular temperature indications.

Auxiliary feedwater pumps are used to cool down the reactor during routine shutdowns and in certain accident conditions.

On June 11, plant engineers reviewed the results of the June 9 test and noted the pump temperature was higher than normal. Another test was performed on the same day. During this test, the pump temperature again approached the pump's operating limit. As a result, plant operators stopped the test, shut down the auxiliary feedwater pump and declared it inoperable.

The utility implemented actions to identify the cause of the problem and fix it. However, plant operators were unable to identify the cause repair the problem causing the plant to shut down on June 14. The conditions of the plant's license require the plant to shut down if one of the auxiliary feedwater pumps is unavailable for more than 72 hours.

The plant will remain shutdown until the root cause is identified and necessary repairs are implemented.

The NRC inspectors will review the circumstances surrounding the incident and its safety significance; examine the historic maintenance and operation of the pump; review routine pump testing practices, as well as certain programs and procedures; assess the utility's response to the overheating issue, the preliminary root cause determination, and proposed corrective actions.

The special inspection will continue until the inspection goals are achieved.

The special inspection team will issue its report about 30-45 days after the completion of the inspection. The report will be available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs or in the agency's online document library at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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