



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO CONDUCT OPEN HOUSE ON APRIL 30 REGARDING ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR NINE MILE POINT AND FITZPATRICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an informational open house on Thursday, April 30, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Nine Mile Point and James A. FitzPatrick nuclear power plants.

The open house, which will run from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Scriba Town Hall, 42 Creamery Road in Oswego, N.Y., will afford members of the public an opportunity to learn first-hand from NRC staff members about performance at the plants during 2008. Unlike the standard meeting format, the setting will allow citizens to discuss plant-related topics on a one-on-one basis with NRC inspectors assigned to the plant and their NRC Region I supervisors.

Nine Mile Point, which is the site of two boiling-water reactors, and FitzPatrick, which is the site of a single boiling-water reactor, are located adjacent to one another in Scriba (Oswego County), N.Y. Constellation Energy, LLC, owns and operates Nine Mile Point while Entergy Nuclear Northeast owns and operates FitzPatrick.

Overall, the Nine Mile Point 1 & 2 reactors and the FitzPatrick reactor operated safely during 2008.

At the conclusion of last year, as assessed through the NRC Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for Nine Mile Point 1 or FitzPatrick that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green." Therefore, for the rest of 2009, Nine Mile Point 1 and FitzPatrick will receive the normal, very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well. In 2008, the NRC devoted approximately 6,490 hours of inspection to the Nine Mile Point reactors, including three major team inspections, and about 5,640 hours of inspection to the FitzPatrick reactor, including four major team inspections.

However, with respect to Nine Mile Point 2, one “white” (low to moderate safety significance) Performance Indicator was identified in the fourth quarter of 2008 involving the Mitigating Systems Performance Index for Cooling Water Systems. Specifically, the Performance Indicator crossed the threshold from “green” to “white” as a result of a combination of availability challenges associated with service water pump maintenance activities and reliability challenges associated with the introduction of foreign material into the service water pump suction in November 2008. The “white” Performance Indicator moved Nine Mile Point 2 from the Licensee Response Column to the Regulatory Response Column of the NRC’s Action Matrix, available at http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html , resulting in additional oversight from the NRC until the agency is satisfied the issue has been properly addressed. Nine Mile Point 2 will also continue to receive the routine, or baseline, level of inspections from the NRC.

“Nine Mile Point 2 will receive additional scrutiny from the NRC in 2009, which is exactly the way our Reactor Oversight Process is designed to work,” NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. “As always, our inspectors will remain on the lookout for any problems or adverse trends that might indicate a change in performance, and we will not hesitate to act should we identify any safety concerns.”

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at each plant twice a year: During the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s web site, www.nrc.gov, each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. This interaction is in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment for the Nine Mile Point plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/nmp_2008q4.pdf . The annual assessment for the FitzPatrick plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/fitz_2008q4.pdf . The notice for the open house is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML090960217. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> . Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC’s Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@NRC.GOV .

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to Nine Mile Point and the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to FitzPatrick, as well as by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas to be inspected at Nine Mile Point this year by NRC specialists are radiological safety, operator licensing, emergency preparedness and fire protection. Among the areas to be inspected at

FitzPatrick this year by NRC specialists are radiological safety, emergency preparedness, the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel and permanent plant modifications.

Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP1/nmp1_chart.html . Current performance information for Nine Mile Point 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/NMP2/nmp2_chart.html . Current performance information for FitzPatrick is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FITZ/fitz_chart.html .

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