



NRC NEWS

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NRC SENDS SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM TO FARLEY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a Special Inspection Team to the Farley nuclear power plant to review the circumstances surrounding the failure of a pump which provides cooling water to several safety systems on Unit 2. The Farley plant is operated by Southern Nuclear Operating Company about 18 miles south of Dothan, Ala.

On Aug. 15, 2009, plant employees were testing the service water pump, one of five on each unit, when they noticed a noise and stopped the test. After the pump was stopped, the workers discovered the pump's shaft had seized. The pump was subsequently dismantled and sent off site for an extensive analysis over the past several months. Based on that analysis, Southern Nuclear determined the failure was associated with a coating on the pump shaft applied during the manufacturing process. Five of the plant's 10 pumps, including the one that failed, were part of an upgrade and there is the potential for the same condition on the other four pumps.

After reviewing the plant's analysis and determining that there are possible generic implications, the NRC staff decided a special inspection was the appropriate course of action.

The inspection will begin Tuesday, Feb. 23, and the two NRC inspectors will identify the circumstances surrounding the pump failure, review the company's actions in response and evaluate the operability of the other service water pumps.

The NRC inspectors will issue a publicly available report within 45 days of the inspection's completion.

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