



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 10-041

March 8, 2010

NRC ISSUES ANNUAL ASSESSMENT LETTERS FOR NATION'S NUCLEAR PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued annual assessment letters to the nation's 104 operating commercial nuclear power plants. "We ensure nuclear power plants are safe, continually inspecting them and rating their performance on a regular basis, as part of our mission to protect people and the environment," said Eric Leeds, director of the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

Currently, 103 of 104 plants are in the two highest performance categories. There are five levels of plant performance based on a detailed assessment of performance indicators (e.g., safety system availability and reliability, control of radiation exposure and unplanned shutdowns) and inspection findings. Levels range from "fully meeting all safety cornerstone objectives" (highest level) to "unacceptable performance" (lowest level). If a nuclear power plant's performance declines, the NRC increases the level of inspection to ensure the plant operator is taking the steps necessary to correct the situation. The additional amount of inspection is commensurate with the level of plant performance. Additional information on the Reactor Oversight Process is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1649/r4/>.

Later this spring and summer, the NRC will host a public meeting or other event in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results of the annual assessment. A separate announcement will be issued for each plant meeting. In addition to the annual assessment letters, plants also receive an NRC inspection plan for the coming year. Updated information on plant performance is posted to the NRC Web site every quarter at:

http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html.

Eighty-four plants are performing at the highest level and are being inspected by NRC using the normal detailed level inspection program. Nineteen plants are performing at the next highest level, needing to resolve one or two items of low safety significance; and will receive additional inspection and attention to follow up on corrective actions. These plants are: Braidwood 1 (Ill.); Brunswick 1 and 2 (N.C.); Columbia Generating Station (Wash.); Davis-Besse (Oh.) Dresden Unit 3 (Ill.); Duane Arnold (Iowa); Farley 1 and 2 (Ala.); Indian Point 3 (N.Y.); McGuire 1 and 2 (N.C.); Nine Mile Point 2 (N.Y.); Oyster Creek (N.J.); Palisades (Mich.); Prairie Island 2 (Minn.);

San Onofre 2 (Calif.); Seabrook (N.H.); and Waterford 3(La.). The Ginna plant, in New York, is at the third level of performance with one degraded safety cornerstone and will receive more NRC inspections, senior management attention and oversight focused on the cause of the degraded performance.

Each plant receives either a mid-cycle review letter or an annual assessment letter every six months, along with an NRC inspection plan. The upcoming mid-cycle assessment letters will be issued in September 2010.

Updated information on plant performance is posted to the NRC Web site as it becomes available. The annual assessment letters sent to each licensee are available on the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/listofasmrpt.html>.

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