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NRC to Increase Oversight at Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will increase its oversight of the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant following the finalization of an inspection finding involving deficient maintenance work on a safety-related relief valve.

The finding was identified during a 2016 NRC inspection of Oyster Creek. The facility is owned and operated by Exelon, located in Lacey Township (Ocean County), N.J. The white safety finding indicates a low to moderate safety significance.

The NRC uses a color-coded system to categorize inspection findings, with colors ranging from green, for very low safety or security significance, to white, yellow or red, for substantial safety or security significance. Findings determined to be greater than green result in additional NRC scrutiny.

This finding involves a problem with one of the plant's electromatic relief valves. EMRVs are used to depressurize the reactor during a pipe break. Oyster Creek has five of these valves.

"These valves serve a key safety function and therefore it is important that they be available to help mitigate severe accidents at the plant," said NRC Region I Administrator Dan Dorman. "We will conduct a supplemental inspection at Oyster Creek to ensure the underlying problems that led to this issue have been appropriately addressed."

Exelon was given an opportunity to request a regulatory conference to provide additional information to the NRC prior to a final agency decision, to submit a written response, or to accept the finding. The company chose to take part in a regulatory conference, which was held on March 9 in the NRC's Region I Office. In terms of corrective actions, Exelon verified correct assembly of the valves following the most recent refueling and maintenance outage at the plant.