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NRC Conducts Special Inspection at Nuclear Fuel Services Facility

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has launched a special inspection this week at the Nuclear Fuel Services fuel fabrication facility in Erwin, Tennessee, to learn more about the circumstances that led to the loss of safety controls in a process ventilation system.

On Oct. 1, 2022, NFS staff were conducting a routine inspection of ventilation system ducts when they found one of the drains in a condition that potentially affected its safety function. Further inspection of the drains by plant staff found instances where a second redundant drain had been obstructed in the past and where both drains were degraded at the same time, potentially increasing the chances of an accident.

The issue surrounding the drain lines did not endanger the plant workers, the public, or the environment. NFS reported the condition as required by NRC and took immediate corrective actions in the affected area. An NRC resident inspector at the plant is observing the plant's response to the event -- including the repair work.

The special inspection will examine how NFS inspects and maintains the safety controls associated with its ventilation systems. It will also review the facts surrounding the event, the company's response, and corrective actions to prevent it from happening again.

An inspection report will be issued about 45 days after the inspection is completed and will be available on the NRC website.