

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

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NRC ISSUES MID-CYCLE REVIEWS FOR 13 NUCLEAR PLANTS PARTICIPATING IN PILOT TEST OF REVISED REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROCESS

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued its mid-cycle reviews for 13 nuclear power plants participating in a pilot evaluation of the new revised reactor oversight process. Results of these reviews and copies of letters sent to each licensee are available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs and at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr> on the NRC web site.

No significant performance problems were identified at any of the 13 plants.

Since the elimination of its Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) program in 1998, NRC has used Plant Performance Reviews (PPRs) as its primary means of assessing nuclear power plant performance while revising its reactor oversight process. PPRs have continued to be conducted at those sites not participating in the pilot evaluation. The final PPRs are scheduled to be conducted in February and March.

The NRC began testing the revised reactor oversight process at 13 nuclear power plants last summer, and the program is expected to be extended to all 103 operating reactors this spring. The revised reactor oversight process is designed to be more objective, understandable, and predictable and focus agency resources on areas that have the greatest impact on safe plant operation.

Under the revised reactor oversight process, the PPR's will be replaced with a new assessment tool -- a mid-cycle and an end-of-cycle review. Both reviews contain an analysis of plant performance as well as a 12-month inspection plan that will be periodically updated to reflect changes in nuclear power plant performance and resource allocations.

All reviews will be made public and posted to the NRC web page, along with letters sent to licensees. This is the first time a mid-cycle review has been conducted. The first end-of-cycle review will be conducted this spring.

An important element of the previous SALP process was the public meeting where the NRC and the licensee met to discuss assessment results. Under the revised reactor oversight process public meetings will continue to be held annually. Because most plants have had public

meetings recently, no meetings for the 13 pilot plants are currently scheduled. Any future meetings will be announced and open to the public.

A full description of the revised reactor oversight process is available on the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm> or <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html> .

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