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NRC Dispatches Augmented Inspection Team to Review Shutdown at Hatch Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) to review the circumstances surrounding an automatic shutdown of Unit 1 at Southern Nuclear Operating Company's Hatch nuclear power plant, located near Baxley in southern Georgia, on January 26. The AIT will assess equipment and personnel performance as well as company actions in response to the shutdown.

Unit 1 automatically shut down from 100% power when a valve in one of the two main lines carrying water to the reactor closed. Southern Nuclear has informed the NRC that it believes the valve closed when the switch was bumped. Some of the equipment did not operate as expected and plant operators cooled the plant down to investigate the cause of the shutdown and subsequent equipment problems.

NRC resident inspectors initially followed the event, but inspectors from NRC headquarters and the regional office in Atlanta, who will serve on the special team, arrived at the plant site this past weekend. The AIT includes experts in boiling water reactor systems and operations and a valve specialist.

When the inspection is completed, the inspectors will meet with the company to discuss their preliminary findings. This meeting will be open to public observation, and the time and location will be announced later.

The NRC team will issue a written report which will be available to the public several weeks after the completion of the inspection.

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