

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC STAFF SETS ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH DUKE ENERGY TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a predecisional enforcement conference in Atlanta on Tuesday, July 20, to discuss with Duke Energy Corporation apparent violations of NRC requirements related to the Unit 1 and Unit 2 ice condensers at the Catawba Nuclear Station near York, South Carolina.

The meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. in Bridge Conference Room D of the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street. It is open to observation by interested members of the public and news media representatives. NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from interested observers.

NRC officials said the apparent violations include the potential inoperability of the Unit 2 ice condenser doors due to ice buildup, the failure to promptly identify and correct ice condenser blockage and damaged ice containers in both units, the failure to perform adequate inspections for foreign debris in the ice condensers, and the failure to properly install ice condenser components as designed.

Ice condensers are incorporated into some Westinghouse pressurized water reactor containment building designs. They are constructed so that steam released during an accident will be directed through borated ice where it is cooled and condensed. This serves to mitigate buildup of pressure on the containment building walls.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that a determination has been made that violations have occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. The purpose is to discuss the apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out errors that may have been made in NRC inspection reports; and to enable the licensee to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a civil penalty, will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

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