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NINE MILE POINT RATED "GOOD" IN THREE CATEGORIES,  
"SUPERIOR" IN FOURTH IN NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Nine Mile Point Nuclear Power Station received performance ratings of "good" in engineering, maintenance and plant support, and "superior" in plant operations in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) of the facility.

The SALP report was sent July 24 to Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation (NMPC), which operates the plant near Oswego, New York. It evaluates the plant's performance from January 29, 1995, through June 1 of this year.

NRC and NMPC officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 2:30 p.m. on August 8, at the Joint News Center in Volney, N.Y. The meeting will be open for public observation and NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials and members of the public.

NRC assessment reports rate licensees in four functional areas - plant operations, engineering, maintenance and plant support -and assign Category 1, 2 or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or adequate. There was no change in any of the plant's ratings from the previous SALP period in this most recent assessment.

In a letter to the licensee, NRC Region I Administrator Thomas T. Martin said: "Overall, the NRC staff continued to observe good performance at Nine Mile Point. Management oversight and involvement in all functional areas were evident and effective. All areas exhibited instances of high levels of performance during the assessment period, with superior performance again obtained in the operations area during the latter part of the assessment period. Although the deviation/event report (DER) program was successful in that staff throughout the site identified problems, the program was less successful in the areas of analysis, evaluation, tracking, and corrective action determination."

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"These weaknesses allowed longstanding problems to go uncorrected, for instance, the problem with the design of the blowout panels for the Unit 1 reactor and turbine buildings. In addition, issues of procedural adequacy, inattention to detail, and equipment problems continued to hamper efforts to maintain a consistently high level of performance."

Mr. Martin has these comments on Nine Mile Point's performance in the four rated categories:

#### PLANT OPERATIONS

Operations management provided effective oversight of activities. Operations personnel demonstrated a clear safety perspective and a questioning attitude. Response to events was appropriate and well controlled. Operations personnel generally performed well and exhibited superior performance in the latter part of the SALP period. The decline in operator performance that was noted early in the period reflected a weakness in the organization determining the underlying causes of personnel performance errors. In addition, sporadic problems with procedure adequacy unnecessarily challenged the operators during routine evolutions.

#### ENGINEERING

Engineering performance with respect to both units was good. Engineering management provided appropriate oversight of activities and implemented effective actions to reduce the backlog of engineering work activities. In general, the quality of engineering design and analysis activities was good, but the NRC staff noted several instances of weak or untimely performance. Performance of engineering programs varied; for example, the emergency diesel generator operational trending program was effectively implemented, but the implementation of the motor-operated valve program was weak. The DER program was effectively used to document problems, but the results of the program were not trended well or consistently shared between units. Engineering personnel were technically knowledgeable and system engineers effectively monitored their assigned systems.

#### PLANT SUPPORT

Good performance continued in the radiological protection program. Programs to maintain radiological exposures as low as is reasonably achievable (ALARA) were effective. The radiological effluents, environmental monitoring, and chemistry programs remained strong. Security program performance was good, although the NRC staff noted some instances of inattention to detail. The emergency preparedness program was well established and maintained. The NRC staff noted recurring problems with event classification during most of the period, but the licensee showed improvement during the latest exercise. Fire protection and housekeeping were generally very good.

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## MAINTENANCE

Maintenance management was generally involved in day-to-day maintenance work and also directed a particularly noteworthy level of attention to maintenance activities during outages to ensure good performance. The NRC staff observed that a strong focus on maintaining safety system readiness at both units was evident in the reduced corrective maintenance backlog. Personnel performance in this area improved as compared with the previous period, but some performance problems continued to arise. The licensee effectively used the corrective action process to identify problems, but tracking and followup of corrective actions were weak in ensuring corrective action effectiveness. Revised programs and procedures resulted in an overall improvement in performing maintenance at the end of the SALP period. The licensee's efforts to properly maintain the material condition of the plants were generally effective; however, the NRC staff continued to observe deficiencies.

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SALP reports are available on the NRC's Internet web site (<http://www/nrc.gov/OPA>) and by e-mail subscription. To receive SALP reports by e-mail as they are issued, send an e-mail to [listproc@nrc.gov](mailto:listproc@nrc.gov) with the following message: subscribe salp yourfirstname yourlastname.