

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II
101 Marietta St., Suite 2900, Atlanta, GA 30323
Tel. 404-331-5503 or 7878

No.: II-97-20

Contacts: Ken Clark 404-331-5503
Roger Hannah 404-331-7878

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, March 4, 1997)

NRC STAFF TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE
WITH VIRGINIA POWER TO DISCUSS CONCERNS AT SURRY NUCLEAR PLANT

Conference Will Be Open To Observation By The Public

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a predecisional enforcement conference with Virginia Power on March 11 in Atlanta to discuss agency concerns about the company's implementation of the NRC's Maintenance Rule (10 CFR 50.65 - "Requirements for Monitoring the Effectiveness of Maintenance at Nuclear Power Plants") at the Surry plant in southeastern Virginia.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss seven apparent violations related to the plant's Maintenance Rule program. An NRC inspection conducted in mid-January concluded that Virginia Power is not adequately implementing the program based on inadequate monitoring of systems and equipment, inadequate system performance criteria, inappropriate evaluation of equipment failures, and inadequate historical reviews of many systems. In addition, the inspectors identified a deficiency in assessing the risk of performing maintenance of some equipment while the plant was operating.

The Maintenance Rule, which all plants were required to implement by July 10, 1996, requires plants to monitor the performance or condition of plant structures, systems or components against established goals to provide assurance they are capable of performing their intended function, or to perform preventive maintenance to keep them capable of performing their function.

The Maintenance Rule includes not only safety-related structures, systems or components but nonsafety-related parts of the plant that may be needed in an accident or emergency situation, or whose failure may affect safety equipment, or whose failure may cause the plant to automatically shut down or to activate a safety-related system.

The enforcement conference will be held from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon in the NRC offices at 101 Marietta Street NW, Suite 2900. The conference is open to observation by the public and the media, and NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from interested observers.

NRC officials said the decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean that a determination has been made that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. The purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes, and safety significance; to provide the licensee an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the company 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 senior NRC officials at a later time.

#