

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
61 Forsyth Street
Suite 23T85
Atlanta, GA 30303

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Contact: Ken Clark (404) 562-4416
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E-Mail kmc2@nrc.gov
Roger Hannah (404) 562-4417
E-Mail rdh1@nrc.gov

**NRC STAFF TO HOLD PREDECISIONAL ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE
WITH DUKE POWER ON JULY 23 ON APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT OCONEE**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a predecisional enforcement conference with Duke Power Company officials in Atlanta on Wednesday, July 23, to discuss apparent violations associated with High Pressure Injection (HPI) system events April 21 and May 3 of this year on Units 2 and 3 at the Oconee nuclear power plant near Seneca, South Carolina.

The conference will be held from 10:00 a.m. (edt) until 12 noon in the NRC Region II office, located on the 24th floor of the Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street. It is open to observation by the public, and NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from observers who attend.

A crack was detected April 21 in a weld on a pipe nozzle which is part of the Unit 2 high pressure injection system. This system is designed to pump water into the reactor vessel during normal operations and postulated emergencies. NRC officials are concerned with the apparent failure of a plant program, established after cracks occurred during the 1980s in this system, to identify and correct at an early stage conditions which indicate likelihood of such cracks. NRC also is concerned about an apparent lack of appropriate action to evaluate and correct measured differences in temperature which could indicate development of conditions which could lead to cracking in this piping.

NRC officials are also concerned with apparent violations, identified subsequent to a May 3 event, which resulted in degradation of the Unit 3 HPI pumps while cooling down following a shutdown. These violations include apparent failure to meet plant technical specification requirements for operability of the system and multiple examples of failures by licensed operators to comply with procedures. Additional violations include multiple examples of inadequate corrective actions for past licensee and industry-identified vulnerabilities in the high pressure injection system, failure to translate system design specifications into appropriate drawings and instructions for storage tank pressure and level instrumentation or to have adequate configuration control for

storage tank level instrumentation valves, and failure to submit a report in a timely manner as required by federal regulations.

NRC officials said the decision to hold the conference does not mean that a determination has been made that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance, to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out any errors in NRC inspection reports and to enable the licensee to outline its proposed corrective actions, and no decisions on possible NRC enforcement action will be made at the conference.

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