

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Region III Office of Public Affairs
801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663
Angela Greenman 630/829-9662
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT LASALLE NUCLEAR STATION IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance has improved and remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at the LaSalle nuclear power plant, located near Seneca, Illinois.

Officials of NRC and Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) will discuss the review during a meeting set for Tuesday, April 6, at 1 p.m. at the Mazon Emergency Operations Facility, North Route 47, Mazon, Illinois. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

The review covers August 4, 1996, through January 31.

Geoffrey Grant, NRC Region III Division Director, in a letter to ComEd, said, "Overall, performance at LaSalle improved ...The plant staff continued to make progress in enhancing station performance...Overall, human performance was much improved due to initiatives implemented during the extended shutdown. The corrective action program was generally effective and identified and resolved safety issues."

"Also, extensive actions taken during the extended shutdown addressed the more significant material condition problems impacting LaSalle Unit 1," Mr. Grant continued. "Engineering personnel identified problems and were involved in supporting operations and maintenance. Programs were generally effective in the plant support area, with occasional problems in program implementation. However, some inconsistency in personnel performance remains. Additionally, some emergent equipment problems, identified during the startup and while the plant has been operating, indicated the need to continue material condition improvement efforts."

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region III Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

Plant performance reviews are an interim measure NRC is utilizing to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of License Performance (SALP) process until a new assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every 12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection findings. This program will be tested at eight sites beginning in June and will be extended to all plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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