

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet:opa@nrc.gov

No. 99-82

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Tuesday, April 20, 1999)

**NRC SCHEDULES PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON METHODS TO ASSESS RISK OF LOW
POWER AND SHUTDOWN OPERATIONS AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public workshop April 27 to discuss the methods available to assess potential accident risks associated with low power and shutdown operations at nuclear power plants.

The workshop, to be held at the DoubleTree Hotel at 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, will begin at 7:45 a.m. and continue until 5:00 p.m.

There are certain safety issues that NRC must consider when a nuclear power plant is operating at low power, or is shut down. After a period of operating at full power, a reactor continues to generate heat through a process called "decay heat." Decay heat decreases the longer a reactor remains shut down, but systems must be in place to continually cool down the reactor.

Also, during shutdown periods such as refueling, reactors are subject to certain safety risks because of the configuration of reactor parts, such as reactor vessels with their "heads" removed. Although the probability of an offsite radioactive release in such circumstances is low, certain safety risks are involved that are not present during normal operations.

Views presented at the workshop will help the NRC develop a program on the use of risk-informed insights regarding low power and shutdown operations.

Members of the Nuclear Energy Institute, the Electric Power Research Institute, and other electric utility representatives, will present their views on the risks. There will be opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and offer their comments.

Following is a complete agenda of the workshop:

7:45 - 8:15 a.m. -- Introduction

8:15 - 10:15 a.m. -- Industry presentation (Westinghouse, Scientech, Seabrook, San Onofre, South Texas, River Bend)

10:15 - 10:30 a.m. -- Break

10:30 - 11:40 a.m. -- Industry presentation (Nuclear Energy Institute, Electric Power Research Institute)

11:40 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 - 1:30 p.m. -- General discussion; perspectives on low power shutdown results

1:30 - 2:00 p.m. -- General discussion; perspectives on low power shutdown scope and level of detail

2:00 - 2:15 p.m. -- Break

2:15 - 3:30 p.m. -- General discussion: perspectives on low power shutdown methods

3:30 - 3:45 p.m. -- Break

3:45 - 4:30 p.m. -- General discussion: perspectives on low power shutdown standard

4:30 - 4:50 p.m. -- General discussion: other issues

4:50 - 5:00 p.m. -- Wrap-up.

Although there is no fee for the workshop, those wishing to attend should contact Erasmia Lois, 301-415-6560 (e-mail: exl1@nrc.gov) to reserve a space.