

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC STAFF SETS ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH DUKE ENERGY TO DISCUSS OCONEE HIGH PRESSURE INJECTION CONCERNS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a predecisional enforcement conference in Atlanta on Tuesday, January 26, to discuss with Duke Energy Corporation officials apparent violations of NRC requirements related to high pressure injection systems at the Oconee nuclear power plant, located near Seneca, South Carolina.

The meeting will be held from 10:30 to 12:30 p.m. at the NRC's Region II office, located in the Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street on the 24th floor. It is open to observation by interested members of the public and news media representatives. NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from interested observers.

NRC officials said the agency will discuss with company representatives two apparent violations involving procedures for manually connecting alternate emergency power to high pressure injection pumps should the regular emergency power supply be lost. The high pressure injection pumps are designed to provide additional water to the reactor in the event of a small leak where pressure in the reactor coolant system remains high. In late 1998, NRC inspectors identified that changes in the plant's emergency procedures had been completed without adequate safety evaluations, and had led to an inadequate procedure for connecting that alternate source of emergency power to the pumps.

The decision to hold a predecisional 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 the apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out errors that may have been made in NRC inspection reports; and to enable the licensee 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 NRC officials at a later time.

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