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NRC SENDS INSPECTION TEAM TO WNP-2

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has sent a five-person team of inspectors from its Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, to Washington Nuclear Power, plant 2, near Richland, Washington, to look into causes of and plant response to a ruptured fire main that flooded rooms containing safety equipment yesterday.

The team, called an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT), is charged with learning the facts surrounding the event but will not be evaluating those facts to determine whether any violations of NRC requirements occurred. That evaluation will be done later.

The AIT will arrive at WNP-2 and begin its fact-finding work on Friday morning, June 19. The team's report will be available in 30 days.

On June 17 a valve in a fire main ruptured at WNP-2 while the plant was in cold shutdown. Water from the fire main flooded rooms containing low pressure safety equipment, which was rendered inoperable. The damaged equipment was not in use and is not needed to maintain the plant in a safe condition at this time.

Plant operators declared a Notice of Unusual Event, the lowest level event on the NRC's emergency action plan. The Unusual Event remains in place due to the inoperability of the fire main.

The plant remains stable in cold shutdown with two fire trucks from the Hanford reservation are standing by at the plant to provide firefighting capability if needed.

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