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Region III Office of Public Affairs  
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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'  
AT DUANE ARNOLD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at the Duane Arnold nuclear power plant, located in Palo, Iowa.

The review of the Duane Arnold Energy Center (DAEC) covers the period September 28, 1997, through January 31.

Geoffrey Grant, NRC Region III Division Director, in a letter to Alliant Utilities, said "Overall, DAEC performance was acceptable. Performance was characterized by teamwork between organizations and appropriate management attention and involvement to ensure routine activities were successfully accomplished. A short-term decline in human performance occurred during the refuel outage early in the assessment period. This recurring increase in human performance errors was recognized by management and corrective actions were taken to address the problems."

"While improved performance was evident during the second half of the refuel outage, the corrective actions were not significantly challenged and an assessment of the effectiveness cannot be made until the next refueling outage in October 1999," Mr. Grant continued. "Material condition of plant equipment continued to be good. Emergent degraded equipment conditions were aggressively addressed and engineering personnel were actively and successfully involved in these and other support 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 plants 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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