

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region IV
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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT WNP-2 IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at WNP-2, a nuclear power plant located near Richland, Washington.

Officials of NRC and Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS), the utility which operates the plant, will discuss the review during a meeting set for Thursday, April 1, at 2 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Facility at 3000 George Washington Way in Richland. 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.

In a letter to WPPSS Chief Executive Officer J.V. Parrish summarizing the review findings, NRC Branch Chief Linda J. Smith noted that overall, performance continued to be acceptable. Operators effectively operated the plant during this assessment period. While the plant was well maintained, there were several instances identified where material condition deficiencies affected the reliability of safety-related and risk significant components.

Engineering's support of operations and maintenance activities was effective in sustaining plant operations; however, minor deficiencies in design control continued to be identified. In plant support, the licensee had well established programs. In addition to core inspection activities, an inspection to review the effectiveness of operators' response to non-routine events will be conducted during the next eight months.

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region IV Office of Public Affairs and will soon be 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, if found acceptable, 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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