

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
Arlington, Texas 76011-8064

RIV: 99-13

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 1, 1999

NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT PALO VERDE IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station located in Wintersburg, Arizona, 70 miles west of Phoenix.

In a letter to Arizona Public Service Co. Vice President, Nuclear James M. Levine, NRC Branch Chief Phil Harrell described the results of the review by saying, "Overall, performance at all three Palo Verde units was acceptable. . . . Both routine and transient operations were properly conducted. . . . The material condition of plant equipment did not result in any significant challenges to plant operations." Human performance issues were noted in several areas of the review; however, none of the individual occurrences challenged reactor safety.

The text of the plant performance review 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>. **No public meeting will be** held to discuss the results of the review because a Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) was issued within the last 18 months.

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 Licensee 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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