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NRC SPECIAL INSPECTION TEAM AT SEABROOK STATION TO LOOK INTO LAST WEEK'S "UNUSUAL EVENT"

A Nuclear Regulatory Commission Special Inspection Team is on site at Seabrook Station looking into last week's loss of off-site power and subsequent reactor trip. Seabrook is operated by North Atlantic Energy Service Company (NAESCO). The plant is located in Seabrook, N.H.

On March 5, Seabrook shutdown from full power due to local grid instability caused by a severe snow storm. When power coming into the site was momentarily lost, both emergency diesel generators automatically started and provided power to vital equipment. Operators declared an "Unusual Event" --- the lowest of the emergency classifications. While the plant automatically shut down safely and remained safe throughout the event, several pieces of equipment, including an emergency feedwater pump, did not perform as expected.

The NRC has sent a special team to review the licensee's root cause determinations for this event and the corrective actions taken by NAESCO in response. The team also will evaluate the licensee's assessment of the risk associated with the event and perform an independent risk assessment.

Three members of the team arrived on site on Monday. A fourth member is supporting the team from the Regional Office in King of Prussia, Pa. An inspection report will be issued about 45 days from the end of the on-site inspection.

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