



NRC NEWS

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NRC PLANS ADDITIONAL INSPECTION AT OCONEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT DUE TO MULTIPLE PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCIES

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has completed its significance determination of an inspection finding at Duke Energy's Oconee nuclear plant near Seneca, South Carolina, related to the adequacy of the plant's tornado mitigation procedures, and concluded that the finding was White (low to moderate safety significance).

In March of this year, the NRC conducted an inspection at the Oconee plant, and inspectors identified that the licensee had not corrected deficiencies in the implementation of the plant's tornado mitigation strategies. Specifically, because of the location of some equipment, plant personnel would be unable, in a sufficient amount of time, to align a pump to provide lake water to the steam generators should such water be needed to mitigate the effects of an accident during a tornado.

This finding and another tornado mitigation related White finding in the same time period both affect the mitigation systems cornerstone (a cornerstone is one of seven specific areas the NRC uses to measure plant performance) on Unit 1, resulting in a degraded cornerstone. As a result of the degraded cornerstone, the NRC staff will perform an additional inspection at the Oconee plant to better understand the causes contributing to these performance issues.

The safety significance of each NRC inspection finding is characterized by a color -- green, white, yellow, or red. The agency response to the inspection findings is based on the significance of the items. A green finding receives normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments result in increasing NRC involvement, including additional inspections.

The NRC cited the Oconee plant for a violation related to the finding, and Duke Energy has 30 days to respond to that notice of violation.

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