



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES FINDING OF LOW TO MODERATE SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE TO LIMERICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that an inspection finding involving emergency preparedness at the Limerick nuclear power plant should be characterized as "white," meaning it is an issue of low to moderate importance to safety but one which may require additional NRC inspections. The plant is located in Montgomery County, Pa., and operated by Exelon Nuclear Corporation.

NRC inspectors identified the finding during a review conducted between April 10 and September 24. It concerns an inadequate company critique that failed to identify a problem with a risk-significant planning standard during an emergency preparedness drill. Specifically, during a simulator drill on February 9, players inappropriately declared a General Emergency -- the highest of four levels of emergency classification -- based on incorrect criteria.

Failure to identify a problem with a risk-significant planning standard had low to moderate safety significance because it occurred during a drill and not during an actual event. Therefore, a violation of NRC regulations did not occur. However, in an actual event, classification errors could impede off-site agencies' abilities to implement protective actions for the public.

Using the agency's significance determination process, NRC officials classify certain conditions at nuclear power plants as being one of four colors which delineate increasing levels of safety significance, beginning with green and progressing to white, yellow or red.

Exelon Nuclear has informed the NRC that it has taken steps to address the performance problems.

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