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NRC SPECIAL INSPECTION OF REACTOR COMPONENT DAMAGE AT QUAD CITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is conducting a special team inspection at the Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station to review cracks which have been found in one of the Unit 2 reactor components. The two-unit facility is operated by Exelon Generation Co. at Cordova, Illinois.

On June 12 the utility found cracks in a portion of the Unit 2 steam dryer, which is located inside the reactor vessel above the steam separator and the reactor fuel. The plant had been shut down to investigate the cause of moisture in the steam piped to drive the turbine-generator. The function of the steam dryer is to remove moisture from the steam before it leaves the reactor.

There was no release of radioactivity associated with the steam dryer problem and no hazard to plant workers or the public.

Unit 1 at the Quad Cities plant remains in operation. There has been no evidence of cracks in the Unit 1 steam dryer.

The NRC team includes inspectors from the Region III Office in Lisle, Illinois, metallurgical specialists from NRC Headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, and the NRC resident inspector assigned to the Quad Cities plant. The team will review the causes of the dryer cracks and evaluate the utility's repair plans. It will also consider the potential for the cracking problem to occur at similar nuclear plants.

The inspection team will issue a report about 30 days after the completion of the inspection. It will be available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs or on the NRC web site in the ADAMS electronic document collection at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available from the NRC's Public Document Room at 800/397-4209.

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