



NRC NEWS

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630) 829-9663

E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

Viktorija Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

NRC TO DISCUSS SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE OF PUMP PROBLEM AT PERRY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of First Energy Nuclear Operating Company on December 17 in Lisle, Illinois, to discuss the safety significance of the failure of a pump which supplies cooling water to safety components at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located in Perry, Ohio.

The pump failed while it was running on September 1. It was subsequently repaired and returned to service on September 5. The pump problem occurred because the utility had failed to have adequate procedures when the pump was reassembled in 1997. Improper reassembly led to increased stress that resulted in damage of an internal component of the pump. The pump is one of three in the emergency service water system which provides cooling water to several plant safety systems.

The NRC staff has completed a preliminary assessment of the incident and concluded that it had a "low to moderate safety significance." The meeting, called a Regulatory Conference, will allow the utility to provide the NRC with any new information pertaining to the event and to present its view of the event's safety significance.

The meeting will be held at 2 p.m. (CST) in the NRC's Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle. Visitors should report first to the Second Floor reception area. The meeting is open to public observation; before the meeting is adjourned, members of the public may ask questions of the NRC staff and provide comments.

NRC inspection findings are evaluated using a four-level scale of safety significance, ranging from "green" for a finding of minor significance, through "white" and "yellow" to "red," for a finding of high safety significance.

The NRC's preliminary evaluation determined the pump problem to be a "white" finding, one of low to moderate safety significance. "White" inspection findings can lead to additional NRC inspections.

Information presented by the utility in the Regulatory Conference will be used by the NRC staff, along with its inspection findings, to determine the final safety significance of the problem. The final determination of the safety significance will be posted on the NRC's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html#reactor>

The inspection findings are detailed in Inspection Report 2003-006, which can be viewed online at the NRC's electronic reading room by entering the accession number ML033040217: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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