



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO CONDUCT RESTART READINESS INSPECTION AT DAVIS-BESSE; MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 12 IN OAK HARBOR, OHIO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will begin a followup Restart Readiness Assessment Team Inspection on Monday, February 2, at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station.

The agency has also scheduled two public meetings with FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company officials on February 12. The first will discuss the preliminary results of two inspections – the Restart Readiness Inspection and the ongoing followup Management and Human Performance Inspection which began January 12.

In the second meeting, the NRC Davis-Besse Oversight Panel will discuss the possible restart of the plant with FirstEnergy officials. The Davis-Besse plant, located near Oak Harbor, Ohio, has been shut down since February 2002 to repair a damaged reactor vessel head and make other safety improvements.

The followup restart readiness inspection will evaluate the performance of the plant staff and equipment to determine if the plant is ready to resume operation. In addition, the inspectors will assess the effectiveness of corrective actions taken by FirstEnergy as a result of issues identified by NRC inspectors during a previous restart readiness inspection in December.

The inspection team includes experienced NRC inspectors from across the country, all of whom were part of the team that identified the performance and operational issues in the December inspection. Rick Skokowski, NRC senior resident inspector at the Byron Nuclear Power Station in Illinois, is the team leader.

Both meetings will be at the Camp Perry Clubhouse, 1000 Lawrence Road, Bldg. 600, on Highway 2 west of Port Clinton. A picture identification is required to enter Camp Perry; the guards will provide visitors with directions to the meeting site.

The public is invited to observe the business portion of each meeting and will have an opportunity to make comments and ask questions of the NRC staff before the meetings are adjourned.

The two meetings will be:

- 2 p.m. - Meeting to discuss the preliminary findings of the followup Restart Readiness Inspection and the followup Management and Human Performance Inspection, which has been evaluating the actions taken by the utility to improve the "safety culture" at Davis-Besse. This second inspection began January 12.
- 6 p.m. - Meeting between the NRC Davis-Besse Oversight Panel and FirstEnergy officials to discuss the basis for the utility's request for authorization to restart reactor operations.

There will be no decision on possible restart during the 6 p.m. meeting. In evaluating FirstEnergy's request for restart, the NRC's Davis-Besse Oversight Panel will review the information presented by the company, along with the results of NRC inspections over the past two years.

The panel will submit its recommendation to James Caldwell, Regional Administrator for NRC Region III. Mr. Caldwell will make a decision on the possible restart after conferring with other senior NRC officials. The decision will be based on the agency's assessment of the ability of FirstEnergy to start up and operate the plant safely.

Extensive information on the NRC's regulatory activities at Davis-Besse is available on the agency's web site: <http://www.nrc.gov> - select "Davis-Besse" from the key topics menu.

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