



NRC NEWS

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NRC SENIOR OFFICIALS WILL MEET WITH POINT BEACH MANAGEMENT TO DISCUSS PLANT PERFORMANCE

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Executive Director for Operations, William Travers, the Regional Administrator for NRC Region III, James Caldwell, and other NRC officials will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Company on February 20 to discuss performance at Point Beach Power Station and the results of a special inspection which thoroughly reviewed the overall performance at the plant. The plant is located near Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

The meeting will be held at 9 a.m. at the Holiday Inn, 4601 Calumet Avenue, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The public is invited to observe the meeting and will have an opportunity to make comments and ask questions of the NRC staff before the meeting is adjourned.

The NRC conducted a special in-depth inspection in response to a significant safety finding related to the auxiliary feedwater system identified by plant personnel in 2001.

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

The 2001 "red" finding was associated with a problem with valves on the auxiliary feedwater system recirculation lines. The NRC determined that if these valves failed to function because of equipment damage, the protective recirculation flow required to support the operation of the auxiliary feedwater pumps would stop and result in pump damage.

A second "red" finding was associated with potential blockage of recirculation lines in the auxiliary feedwater system by debris typically found in the plant's service water system under certain abnormal conditions. This blockage could also lead to pump damage. This problem, which was related to the first "red" finding in that they both affect the auxiliary feedwater recirculation system, was discovered by the utility in October of 2002.

The auxiliary feedwater system is used to safely cool the reactor if problems occur during plant operations and to continue removing heat from the reactor after shutdown. The service water system is the backup to the normal supply of water to the auxiliary feedwater system.

Normal plant operations were not affected by these problems. The utility took action to revise procedures and train reactor operators to address the immediate safety concerns and modified the auxiliary feedwater system to further correct these problems.

The two "red" findings were treated separately because they occurred at different points in time.

The special inspection was tasked with taking a comprehensive look at principal aspects of plant operations to identify other possible performance problems. It examined the adequacy of the utility's investigation and the corrective actions to address both auxiliary feedwater pump issues. The results of the inspection were discussed at a public meeting in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, on December 16, 2003 (refer to press release issued on December 9, 2003).

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