



NRC NEWS

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CONTACT: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

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Email: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF PEACH BOTTOM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Company on Wednesday, April 14, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Peach Bottom nuclear power plant. Exelon operates the twin-reactor plant, which is located near Delta, Pa.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at the Peach Bottom Inn, 6085 Delta Road in Delta. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

The performance period to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2003. In addition, NRC staff will provide a brief overview of how the agency's Reactor Oversight Process works.

A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at:

www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/pb_2003q4.pdf.

Overall, the Peach Bottom plant operated safely and met all cornerstone objectives during the period. (Cornerstones are program areas where NRC measures plant safety performance.) As a result of having only "green" inspection findings and performance indicators at the end of the fourth quarter of 2003, Peach Bottom Unit 3 will receive baseline-level inspections through Sept. 30, 2005. However, based on a "white," or low to moderate safety, inspection finding, Peach Bottom Unit 2 will receive some additional oversight. The inspection finding, which was finalized earlier this year, was related to a deficient maintenance procedure and inadequate corrective actions involving an emergency diesel generator. Unit 2 will also be the subject of a supplemental inspection, planned for September, due to a "white" Performance

Indicator in the third quarter of last year. That indicator tracks the number of unplanned scrams, or shutdowns, per 7,000 critical hours.

In addition, the NRC staff has identified a substantive cross-cutting issue at the Peach Bottom plant in the area of problem identification and resolution and involving corrective action for known equipment problems. The issue is based on one “white” inspection finding and five “green,” or very low safety, inspection findings in which corrective action for a known equipment problem was either insufficient or delayed in implementation. The issue will be evaluated through the NRC baseline inspection program during the current assessment period, particularly in the periodic case reviews associated with problem identification and resolution inspection efforts.

During the first two quarters of 2003, there was a “white” inspection finding affecting both Peach Bottom units in the area of emergency preparedness. However, the NRC conducted a supplemental inspection because of this finding in June 2003 and determined that the company’s response was acceptable.

With regard to security issues, the NRC has issued several orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The agency has also conducted inspections to review the implementation of these requirements and has monitored the action of plant operators in response to changing threat conditions. The NRC will continue security inspections during 2004.

Current performance information for Peach Bottom Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PB2/pb2_chart.html .

Current performance information for Peach Bottom Unit 3 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PB3/pb3_chart.html .

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