



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406

www.nrc.gov

No. I-04-024

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April 26, 2004

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NRC TO DISCUSS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of PPL Susquehanna, LLC, on Tuesday, April 27, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Susquehanna nuclear power plant. PPL operates the twin-reactor plant, which is located in Berwick, Pa.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at the Susquehanna Energy Information Center, 634 Salem Boulevard in Berwick. 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/susq_2003q4.pdf.

Overall, the Susquehanna plant operated safely and met all cornerstone objectives during the period. (Cornerstones are program areas where NRC measures plant safety performance.) As a result, the plant will receive baseline-level inspections through Sept. 30, 2005.

The NRC has identified a substantive cross-cutting issue at the Susquehanna plant in the area of problem identification and resolution. It involves weak evaluations of some technical issues and is based on six "green," or very low safety, inspection findings in which such evaluations either did not identify relevant aspects of problems or did not specify adequate

corrective actions to prevent recurrence. Because the findings highlight the need for improvement in this area, the NRC will assess this issue through the baseline inspection program, particularly in the periodic case reviews associated with problem identification and resolution inspection efforts.

In addition, the NRC has closed a previous cross-cutting issue identified in the mid-cycle 2003 letter regarding the plant. The issue was in the area of human performance and involved lapses in following procedures.

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 Susquehanna Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SUSQ1/susq1_chart.html .

Current performance information for Susquehanna Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SUSQ2/susq2_chart.html .

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