



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF THREE MILE ISLAND 1 NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of AmerGen Energy Company, LLC, on Thursday, May 20, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Three Mile Island 1 nuclear power plant. AmerGen operates the plant, which is located in Middletown, Pa.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in the Council Chamber at Middletown Borough Hall, 60 W. Emaus St. in Middletown. 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 agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

The period of performance 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/tmi_2003q4.pdf.

Overall, the Three Mile Island 1 plant operated safely and met all cornerstone objectives during the period. (Cornerstones are program areas where NRC measures plant safety performance.) The NRC uses color-coded inspections findings and performance indicators to assess performance at nuclear power plants. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. As a result of having all "green" inspection findings and performance indicators, Three Mile Island 1 does not require NRC oversight beyond the normal inspection program. Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I office in King of Prussia, Pa.

In addition, the NRC staff has identified a substantive cross-cutting issue in the area of problem identification and resolution. Eight “green” inspection findings, or findings of very low safety significance, at the plant involved instances in which the organization either did not question or did not sufficiently evaluate plant equipment problems. The NRC will evaluate the company’s progress in addressing this issue via the agency’s normal inspection program.

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 Three Mile Island 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/TMI1/tmi1_chart.html .

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