



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011-4005

No. IV-05-032
Contact: Victor Dricks
Phone: 817-860-8128

September 8, 2005
E-Mail: opa4@nrc.gov

WATERFORD NUCLEAR PLANT TERMINATES UNUSUAL EVENT

The Waterford nuclear plant near Taft, La., has terminated the Unusual Event due to Hurricane Katrina and has begun recovery operations in preparation for restart. As a result, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is shifting from monitoring the effects of Hurricane Katrina to oversight of Waterford's activities in preparation for restart.

On Aug. 27, Waterford declared an Unusual Event and shut down protectively when a hurricane warning was issued for St. Charles Parish, in which the plant is located. The robust design of the plant protected it from any damage, although offsite power and some communications capability was lost during the storm. An Unusual Event is the lowest of four emergency action levels.

Over the weekend, operators restored offsite power, ending reliance on standby diesel generators. An additional set of generators, brought in before the storm as a precautionary measure, were never needed. Repairs have also been made to communications systems, which had been disrupted by Hurricane Katrina. The reactor is safely shut down and the plant cannot restart without NRC permission.

"Under existing emergency plans, the NRC and its licensees took aggressive and appropriate steps to prepare for Hurricane Katrina," NRC Chairman Nils Diaz said. "The NRC requires all nuclear plant operators to have in place detailed site-specific plans and procedures for a variety of emergency situations, including natural disasters."

The plant will remain shut down while workers perform some minor maintenance unrelated to the hurricane. Operators will not restart the reactor until NRC completes its restart readiness assessment, to verify both the plant and its staff are ready to support full power operation. The agency's resident inspectors, augmented by regional and Headquarters staff, will continue around-the-clock oversight of licensee activities.

###