



NRC NEWS

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NRC DETERMINED POTENTIAL FLOODING AT KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR PLANT TO BE OF SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTANCE TO SAFETY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that potential flooding issue at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Station, identified in a 2004 NRC inspection, was of “substantial importance to safety.” The plant, operated by Dominion Generation Co., is located at Kewaunee, Wis.

The issue was determined to be a “yellow” inspection finding in the NRC’s classification of safety significance which ranges from green, through white and yellow, to red. Yellow inspection findings – those of “substantial importance to safety” – result in additional NRC inspections and meetings with the utility to address the issue.

The NRC staff met with Dominion officials on Nov. 8 to discuss the safety significance of the issue, and, after reviewing information submitted by the utility, issued the “yellow” determination on Dec. 21.

An NRC inspection in September 2004 found that portions of the turbine building could become flooded as a result of seismic conditions or equipment failures. This flooding could lead to a malfunction of safety equipment needed for safe shutdown of the plant.

The plant was subsequently shut down in February to make extensive system and structural modifications to address the potential flooding problem.

“The Kewaunee plant took extensive corrective measures, including work performed in a four-month outage earlier this year,” said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. “However, the plant missed an opportunity to discover and correct this issue in 2003 when minor flooding in the turbine building showed the potential to challenge the function of certain safety equipment.”

“The NRC will continue to focus on the plant’s engineering and corrective action programs to assure that the plant staff effectively identifies and resolves problems that may affect safety systems,” he added.

The NRC also issued a Notice of Violation to the company for failing to address the design issues involved in the potential flooding problem. The company must respond to the Notice by Jan. 20, describing their planned and completed corrective actions.

NRC Inspection Report 05-11, issued Oct. 6, covering the flooding issues, is available in the NRC's online document library, known as ADAMS:
<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Use accession number ML052800430 to locate the report. The notice to the company on the "yellow" significance determination will also be available in the ADAMS library. In addition, both documents are available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs.

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