



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR DAVIS-BESSE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co. on Tuesday, May 2, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located near Oak Harbor, Ohio.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at the Energy Education Center, Davis-Besse Administration Building, 5502 North State Route 2, in Oak Harbor. The NRC will respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Davis-Besse plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III 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: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/davi_2005q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Davis-Besse plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

The plant returned from increased oversight to regular NRC oversight in July 2005 and remained under regular oversight for final two quarters of the year. During that time all performance indicators and inspections findings were "green," with the exception of one "white" finding associated with emergency siren testing in 2004 and reporting of the siren testing data.

Prior to returning to regular oversight, the plant was shut down from March 2002 until March 2004 due to the discovery of severe corrosion by boric acid on the reactor vessel head. As a result of this discovery, the plant was placed under increased oversight. The plant resumed operation in March

2004 but remained under increased NRC oversight until the agency determined that the plant's performance warranted the return to regular oversight.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are access control to radiologically significant areas, problem identification and resolution, fire protection, and maintenance effectiveness.

In addition, the NRC will conduct inspections to provide enhanced oversight of the results of independent assessments in the areas of operations, corrective actions, engineering, and safety culture and safety conscious work environment. The independent assessment of these areas for five years following Davis-Besse's restart was a condition of the plant's return to service.

Current performance information for Davis-Besse is available on the NRC's web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DAVI/davi_chart.html .

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