



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE AT COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with Energy Northwest officials on June 1, to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Columbia Generating Station during 2005.

The 6 p.m. meeting at Energy Northwest's Business Services Center, 3000 George Washington Way, Richland, Wash., is open to public observation. Before the session ends, NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"Each year, the NRC assesses the performance of all of the nation's commercial nuclear power plants," said Region IV Administrator Bruce S. Mallett. "The meeting gives us an opportunity to discuss our findings with the company, local officials and members of the public. We look forward to meeting with members of the community and answering any questions they may have about our oversight."

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2005 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/wnp_2005q4.pdf .

Overall, Columbia Generating Station operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. In addition to the baseline (or routine) level of inspections during 2006, the NRC will focus attention on weaknesses in problem identification and resolution.

Two supplemental inspections were conducted earlier this year and have verified that corrective actions have been taken to address a number of safety system failures and unplanned reactor shutdowns that occurred in the past.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region IV Office in Arlington, Texas. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected during the next year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness and radiological safety.

Current performance information for Columbia Generating Station is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/WASH2/wash2_chart.html .

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