



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO CONDUCT SPECIAL INSPECTION AT PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will conduct a special inspection to evaluate problems related to the emergency diesel generators at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, located 50 miles west of Phoenix, Ariz.

NRC is taking this action following the failure of a Unit 3 emergency diesel generator to activate during testing on July 25 and Sept. 22. NRC requires the emergency diesel generators be tested monthly to ensure they are capable of performing their safety function. The generators produce electricity for safety systems and components in the event of a loss of offsite power during an emergency. A preliminary review by Arizona Public Service Co., which operates Palo Verde, suggests there may be a problem with a component that is part of an electrical relay used to activate the generators.

“APS has taken corrective action to ensure the emergency diesel generators will work,” said Region IV Administrator Bruce S. Mallett. “But we felt it appropriate to take a deeper look at this issue through a special inspection.”

The special inspection will evaluate the adequacy of the licensee’s response to the situation, the root cause of the problem, corrective actions, and determine if there are generic implications for other nuclear power plants.

The NRC’s special inspection team, consisting of two inspectors from the NRC’s Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, is expected to begin its review tomorrow.

The team will spend about a week on site and prepare a written report that will be issued about four weeks after the inspection is completed. The report will be publicly available on the agency's web site and through its Electronic Reading Room at: <http://www.nrc.gov> as an Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS) document. Help in using ADAMS is available through the NRC Public Document Room by calling 1-800-397-4209.

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