



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT PALISADES NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a special inspection team to the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant after an NRC inspector found that the plant's three auxiliary feedwater pumps were set in an incorrect operating mode during reactor shutdown and subsequent startup. The plant, operated by Nuclear Management Co., is located near Covert, Mich.

The reactor was shut down on Nov. 1 due to an unrelated problem with a leak from an equipment cooling system. The leak was repaired, and operators began reactor startup on Nov. 3. During reactor startup, an NRC resident inspector discovered that the auxiliary feedwater pumps were set for manual operation when they were required to operate automatically.

NRC Regional Administrator James Caldwell said, "The reactor was safely cooled during the startup process, and there was no threat to public health and safety. Our inspection team will focus on why the pump control system was set incorrectly and why the plant staff did not discover the incorrect setting."

The auxiliary feedwater pumps are used to supply water to cool the reactor during startup and shutdown and under certain accident conditions. The problem was identified while the plant was in the early stages of startup with one of the auxiliary feedwater pumps in operation.

Plant operators stopped the startup procedure to reset the pump controls and, after further review, resumed starting up the reactor. The plant is now operating at full power.

The plant staff determined that the pump controller was changed from automatic to manual on during the Nov. 1 reactor shutdown process.

The NRC inspectors will review the circumstances surrounding the incident, including the plant staff's response to the situation and the operators' training, knowledge of procedures, and actions.

The special inspection team will issue its report 30 to 45 days after the completion of the inspection. The report will be available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs or from the agency's online document library at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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