



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No: II-08-007

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Feb. 13, 2008

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## **BROWNS FERRY UNIT 1 NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL NRC OVERSIGHT**

Unit 1 at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry nuclear power plant, near Athens, Ala., will receive additional oversight from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as a result of one of the indicators used by the agency to assess plant performance becoming "yellow." The "yellow" designation came after the plant experienced several unplanned shutdowns during 2007, crossing the NRC's threshold for that performance indicator.

Color-coded performance indicators and inspection findings are used by the NRC to evaluate performance at all nuclear power plants. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. In the case of performance indicators, they are updated on a quarterly basis as new plant data becomes available, with any changes reflected on the NRC's web site: [www.nrc.gov](http://www.nrc.gov).

Browns Ferry Unit 1 restarted in May 2007 after an extended shutdown. During the fourth quarter of 2007, the performance indicator for unplanned scrams (shutdowns) became effective for Browns Ferry Unit 1 after the reactor had been critical for 2400 hours. Five unplanned scrams or shutdowns between the May restart and the fourth quarter led to the "yellow" performance indicator.

"Our oversight process uses both inspections and performance indicators to ensure safety," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said. "Any change in a performance indicator leads to additional NRC oversight, especially in that particular area."

In November, the NRC conducted a focused inspection to evaluate the causes of the shutdowns and did not identify any significant findings that would impact plant safety.

With this change, the plant will move from the Licensee Response column of the NRC's Action Matrix to the Degraded Cornerstone column. The Action Matrix, which is available at: [www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix\\_summary.html](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html), is used by the agency to determine the appropriate level of oversight for nuclear power plants. The change will result in an increase in the NRC's inspection and assessment oversight at Browns Ferry Unit 1. This

increased oversight will include a supplemental inspection to provide assurance that the issues have been adequately addressed.

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