



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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PUBLIC MEETING ON TRANSITION OF OPERATING NUCLEAR PLANTS TO A RISK-INFORMED FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff and officials of Progress Energy and Duke Energy Power Co., will meet Thursday, July 17, to discuss the Shearon Harris and Oconee nuclear power plant's transition from the current fire protection program to an alternative program that allows licensees to focus on the areas of greatest fire risk. The two plants volunteered to participate in a Transition Pilot Program. Plant officials will discuss their applications to amend their operating licenses, and NRC staff will discuss the process for reviewing these applications.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, will begin at 9 a.m. with a brief ceremony to recognize the participants in the Transition Pilot Program. Formal discussions will begin at 9:30 a.m. The ceremony and the meeting will be held in Conference Room T-2B3 in the agency's Two White Flint North building at 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.

"The Oconee and Shearon Harris plants that volunteered to participate in the pilot program have reached a major milestone in their transition to a risk-informed fire protection program and we want to recognize this achievement," Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation Eric Leeds said. "Our staff is currently reviewing the applications from Duke Power and Progress Energy and believe that the information developed during preparation of their applications will help the remaining plants to complete their transitions."

Also on the same day, the NRC staff will brief the Commission on the agency's overall nuclear power plant fire protection program. The meeting, which is open to the public for observation, will be held at 2 p.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room, at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.

In June 2004, the Commission approved the alternative fire protection rule, 10 CFR 50.48(c), as a risk-informed and performance-based alternative to the existing prescriptive rules in 10 CFR 50.48(b). The alternative rule endorses, with some exceptions, the fire protection requirements contained in the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 805, "Performance-Based Standard for Fire Protection for Light-Water Reactor Electric Generating Plants, 2001 Edition." In order to help licensees make the transition from their current fire

protection program to one based on NFPA 805; the NRC staff issued Regulatory Guide 1.205, “Risk-Informed, Performance-Based Fire Protection for Existing Light-Water Nuclear Power Plants.”

In August 2005, NRC kicked off the Transition Pilot Program with Oconee and Shearon Harris volunteering to be pilot plants for the transition to NFPA 805. To aid other plants in their transition to the new rule, NRC and industry staff observed the plants’ progress and developed information to address transition issues. To date, operators of 47 nuclear power plants have sent NRC letters of intent to transition their facilities to NFPA 805.

The Shearon Harris nuclear plant is located near Raleigh, N.C., and operated by Progress Energy. The Oconee Nuclear Power plant is near Greenville, S.C. and operated by Duke Energy Power Co.

More information on the meeting is available on the NRC’s Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/public-meetings/index.cfm>. The meeting Web cast will also be available at this Web address on the day of the meeting. Anyone with questions about the morning meeting should contact Marlayna Vaaler at 301-415-3178.

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