



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT THE PALISADES NUCLEAR POWER PLANT DUE TO OPERATIONAL AND EQUIPMENT PROBLEMS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is conducting a special inspection at the Palisades Nuclear Power Station to review operational and equipment problems that prevented personnel from exiting the containment area. The plant is operated by Entergy and is located near Covert, Mich.

On Aug. 5, 2008, the Palisades plant was shut down to replace leaking control rod drive seals. Five individuals were inside the plant containment area inspecting safety-related piping and components. When they were ready to exit, both normal and emergency containment doors failed to open. In addition, telephone communication from the containment failed.

The five people in the containment area were only able to exit when another plant worker entered containment. The incident did not result in radiation overexposure but the individuals were in an area with high temperatures.

“Even though this incident did not result in overexposure, it is important for us to understand its causes,” said Regional Administrator James Caldwell. “Our special inspection team is tasked with reviewing the operational and equipment problems which resulted in five people being unable to leave containment through normal or backup means.”

Region III dispatched a three-person special inspection team to review the circumstances around the incident including planning, controlling and monitoring of activities inside the containment, as well as equipment problems. The special inspection will also evaluate the plant’s ability to manage the risk of certain maintenance activities associated with the plant shutdown.

The special inspection will also review the utility’s response to the situation and the company’s corrective actions.

The duration of a special inspection cannot be determined in advance. The average duration of a special inspection is seven days. The inspection report will be issued about 45 days after the inspection is complete. It will be available through the NRC RIII Office of Public Affairs and at the NRC web site: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>

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