



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ISSUES ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS FOR NATION'S NUCLEAR PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued annual assessment letters to the nation's 104 operating commercial nuclear power plants. All the plants continue to operate safely.

"Our ongoing assessment of nuclear power plant performance is at the heart of the agency's mission of protecting people and the environment," said Eric Leeds, director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. "The 2008 year-end results show that about 83 percent of the plants are performing strongly enough that we're satisfied with our basic level of inspections at those sites."

If a nuclear power plant's performance declines, the NRC assigns additional personnel to ensure the plant operator is taking the steps necessary to correct the situation. The additional amount of inspection is commensurate with the level of plant performance. Only one reactor, Unit 3 at Palo Verde (Ariz.), requires the NRC's highest level of attention. It will continue to undergo additional inspections this year to confirm the plant's performance issues are being addressed. Three reactor units, Cooper (Neb.) and Units 1 and 2 at Palo Verde (Ariz.), require significant NRC attention, and another 14 reactor units, Units 1 and 2 at Byron (Ill.), Unit 1 at Comanche Peak (Texas), Unit 1 at Farley (Ala.), Unit 1 at Grand Gulf (Miss.), Unit 2 at Hatch (Ga.), Kewaunee (Wis.), Units 1 and 2 at McGuire (N.C.), Unit 2 at Nine Mile Point (N.Y.), Unit 1 at Oconee (S.C.), Palisades (Mich.), Unit 1 at Prairie Island (Minn.), and Unit 2 at San Onofre (Calif.), will get some additional attention beyond the basic level.

Later this spring and summer, the NRC will meet publicly in locations near the plants to discuss plant issues. A separate announcement will be issued for each of these meetings. In addition to the annual assessment letters, plants also receive an NRC inspection plan for the coming year. Updated information on plant performance is posted to the NRC Web site every quarter. The plants also receive a mid-cycle assessment letter during the year; the next mid-cycle letters will be issued in September.

The assessment letters sent to each licensee are available on the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/index.html> and through ADAMS, the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System. Help in using ADAMS is available from the NRC Public Document Room by calling (301) 415-4737 or (800) 397-4209.

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