



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO CONDUCT OPEN HOUSE ON APRIL 7 REGARDING ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR CALVERT CLIFFS PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an informational open house on Tuesday, April 7, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Calvert Cliffs nuclear power plant.

The open house, which will run from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Express, 355 Merrimac Court, Prince Frederick, Md., will afford members of the public an opportunity to learn first-hand from NRC staff members about performance at the plant during 2008. Unlike the standard meeting format, the setting will allow citizens to discuss plant-related topics on a one-on-one basis with NRC inspectors assigned to the plant and their NRC Region I supervisor.

Calvert Cliffs, which is the site of two pressurized-water reactors, is located in Lusby (Calvert County), Md. It is owned and operated by Constellation Energy.

Overall, Calvert Cliffs operated safely during 2008. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the NRC Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for the plant that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green."

However, the NRC issued a preliminary "white" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding for Calvert Cliffs on Feb. 26, 2009. The finding involved a problem created when the company revised the Emergency Action Levels (EALs) for the plant in 2005. The EALs help guide emergency response decisions for significant events at nuclear power plants. The issue was self-identified by Constellation, which has implemented corrective actions to address it. If the "white" finding is finalized, Calvert Cliffs will move from the Licensee Response Column to the Regulatory Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix, available at http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html. That would result in additional oversight from the NRC until the agency is satisfied the issue has been properly addressed. For the remainder of 2009, Calvert Cliffs also will receive the very detailed inspection regime routinely carried out under the Reactor Oversight Process. Calvert Cliffs received approximately 5,200 hours of NRC inspection in 2008, including six major team inspections.

“In 2008, all but one of the 26 commercial power reactors in Region I, which covers the Northeastern United States, fully met our clearly defined performance criteria. Calvert Cliffs was among those plants achieving those objectives,” NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. “With respect to 2009 performance reviews, if the ‘white’ finding is finalized, the plant would correspondingly receive some additional scrutiny from the NRC, which is exactly the way our Reactor Oversight Process is designed to work. As always, our inspectors will remain on the lookout for any problems or adverse trends that might indicate a change in performance, and we will not hesitate to act should we identify any safety concerns.”

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year: During the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s web site, www.nrc.gov, each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. This interaction is in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment for the Calvert Cliffs plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/calv_2008q4.pdf. The notice for the open house is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML090830389. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC’s Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@NRC.GOV.

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas to be inspected at Calvert Cliffs this year by NRC specialists are dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, radiological safety, emergency preparedness, problem identification and resolution, and reactor coolant system dissimilar metal welds.

Current performance information for Calvert Cliffs Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/CALV1/calv1_chart.html. Current performance information for Calvert Cliffs Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/CALV2/calv2_chart.html.

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