



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS ON APRIL 16 IN BRATTLEBORO, VT., TO DISCUSS VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR PLANT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold two public meetings on Thursday, April 16, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.

Both meetings will take place at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Center, at 1380 Putney Road in Brattleboro, Vt. The first session, which is scheduled for 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., will be a discussion between NRC staff and representatives of the plant's owner/operator, Entergy Nuclear, about the plant's performance during 2008. There will be time allotted for questions and comments from members of the public prior to the meeting's adjournment. The second session is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. and will be a town hall-style meeting dedicated to answering questions from the public with respect to the plant's performance.

Vermont Yankee is the site of a single boiling-water reactor. The facility is located in Vernon (Windham County), Vt.

Overall, Vermont Yankee 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." Therefore, for the remainder of 2009, Vermont Yankee will receive the very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well. In 2008, the NRC devoted approximately 6,270 hours of inspection to the facility, including five 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. Vermont Yankee was among the plants achieving those objectives. That means those plants will receive the normal level of NRC oversight this year if they continue to meet the high safety benchmarks set out for each site," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "That said, our inspectors will remain on the lookout for any problems or adverse trends that might indicate a change in performance. As always, 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. The meetings are in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment letter for the Vermont Yankee plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/vy_2008q4.pdf. The notice for the annual assessment meeting is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML090780293. 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 at Vermont Yankee to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are radiological safety, problem identification and resolution, emergency planning and permanent plant modifications.

Current performance information for Vermont Yankee is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VY/vy_chart.html.

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