



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## NRC ISSUES YELLOW INSPECTION FINDING TO ST. LUCIE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that an inspection finding at the St. Lucie nuclear power plant related to the failure to identify and correct quality and design issues which allowed air into a Unit 1 cooling water system is "yellow." This determination means the issue has substantial safety significance and will result in additional NRC inspections and potentially other NRC actions. The St. Lucie plant, operated by Florida Power & Light, is located in Jensen Beach on the east coast of Florida about 10 miles southeast of Fort Pierce.

After the NRC staff identified two apparent violations related to the air intrusion, a conference with FPL was held Feb. 19. During that meeting, the company described its assessment of the significance of the finding, its root cause evaluation and corrective actions. After considering the information from the inspection, the conference, and additional information supplied after the conference, the NRC staff has concluded that an apparent violation related to design requirements did not occur and that issue was closed. However, the NRC staff did determine that the inspection finding for the failure to identify and correct the source of the air intrusion in the cooling water system is appropriately characterized as "yellow." The NRC is also citing the company for a violation.

Under the NRC reactor oversight process, inspection findings are evaluated using a significance determination process and assigned a color indicating its safety significance. Findings with very low safety significance are labeled "green." "White" findings have low to moderate safety significance, "yellow" findings have substantial safety significance, and "red" findings have high safety significance.

"This issue illustrates the importance of promptly identifying and correcting problems," said NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes. "While there were no actual safety consequences, air in that system could have lessened its capacity to cool plant safety equipment."

The NRC staff will determine the most appropriate response and notify FPL later of any additional inspections, meetings or other activities the agency may plan. FPL has 30 days to respond to the NRC's significance determination for the "yellow" finding.

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