



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. I-12-015

April 9, 2012

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NRC TO HOLD OPEN HOUSE ON APRIL 18 IN LIMERICK, PA., TO DISCUSS LIMERICK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an open house on Wednesday, April 18, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Limerick nuclear power plant.

The open house will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Limerick Township Municipal Building, at 646 W. Ridge Pike in Limerick (Montgomery County), Pennsylvania. Members of the public will have an opportunity to learn first-hand from NRC staff members about the plant's safety performance during 2011 and the NRC's oversight of the facility. The meeting format 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.

The plant, which is the site of two boiling-water reactors, is located in Limerick and is owned and operated by Exelon Generation Co., LLC.

Overall, Limerick operated safely during 2011. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for Limerick Unit 1 that were other than "Green" (very low risk) and no inspection findings that were "Greater than Green" (all findings were of very low safety significance). Therefore, for the rest of 2012, Limerick Unit 1 will receive the very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well.

Limerick Unit 2, however, was in the Regulatory Response Column of the NRC's Action Matrix (http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html) as of the end of 2011, meaning it will receive additional oversight from the agency this year. That was the result of the unit receiving a "White" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding involving inadequate procedures related to the operation of two main feedwater system valves. The NRC finalized the finding on Dec. 8, 2011. An NRC team inspection is planned for the week of June 11, 2012, at the plant to review the company's root cause and contributing cause evaluation for the problems; its assessment of potential similar issues; and its corrective actions to prevent a recurrence.

In 2011, the NRC devoted approximately 5,260 hours of inspection to the Limerick plant under its normal battery of reviews included in the agency's Reactor Oversight Process.

"Our expectation is that Exelon will thoroughly address the issues that contributed to the 'White' inspection finding finalized for Limerick late last year. Ensuring that occurs will be a focus for the NRC in 2012," NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. "Looking back on 2011, our inspectors spent time checking on whether there were any immediate safety concerns at U.S. nuclear power plants following the March events at the Fukushima Daiichi facility in Japan. Those reviews indicated the plants remained safe for continued operation."

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 risk 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 for the Limerick plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/lim_2011q4.pdf. The notice for the open house is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML12080A028. 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, Pennsylvania. Among the areas of performance at Limerick to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, the plant's problem identification and resolution program, emergency preparedness and the facility's implementation of a voluntary industry initiative to address potential degradation of underground piping.

Current performance information for Limerick Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LIM1/lim1_chart.html. Current performance information for Limerick Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LIM2/lim2_chart.html.

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