

NRC Approves First Complete Emergency Plan Using 10 CFR Part 52

On August 26, 2009, the NRC signed the fourth Early Site Permit (ESP-004) for two new reactors at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant (VEGP) site, located near Waynesboro, Georgia. The issuance of the ESP to Southern Nuclear Operating Company (Southern) represents a milestone in the licensing of new nuclear power reactors, in that it utilized NRC's new streamlined licensing process under 10 CFR Part 52 (Part 52).

As part of the ESP application review, the NRC, in consultation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), reviewed and approved a complete and integrated emergency plan in support of the proposed VEGP Units 3 & 4. Southern took advantage of an ESP

option in Part 52 that allows an applicant to submit a *complete and integrated emergency plan*, and receive final approval of the plan in advance of a Combined License (COL) application. The first three ESP applications included a *major features emergency plan* – also allowed under Part 52 – which is a limited description of the complete and integrated emergency plan that would be submitted in a COL application that references the ESP.

An important application requirement for a complete emergency plan is the inclusion of objective and easily verifiable emergency planning Inspections, Tests, Analyses, and Acceptance Criteria (EP ITAAC). EP ITAAC serve as final NRC review placeholders for various aspects of the emergency plan

that cannot be reviewed prior to actual construction of the new reactor facilities. The Vogtle ESP application demonstrated the successful use of this first-of-a-kind licensing concept. Using the EP ITAAC, the NRC staff was able to make the required reasonable assurance finding regarding the adequacy of the proposed emergency plan – before the reactors exist.

The staff's detailed evaluation of the Vogtle Units 3 & 4 emergency plan (included the EP ITAAC), and a summary of FEMA's findings for the State and local emergency plans, is included as Section 13.3, "Emergency Planning," of NUREG-1923 (published July 2009); which is available on www.nrc.gov, using ADAMS Accession ML092290650.

Emergency Preparedness Rulemaking Moves Forward

On May 18, 2009, proposed changes to NRC regulations to enhance emergency preparedness requirements were published in the *Federal Register* for public comment. As a part of the public comment period (which ends October 19, 2009), the NRC and FEMA hosted eleven public meetings around the country to introduce the proposed rule and related guidance changes. Meetings included presentations of the proposed changes by both the NRC and FEMA, followed by a period for meeting attendees to ask clarifying questions about the proposed changes.

The public meetings were well attended by a variety of stakeholders, including representatives from industry, State and local governments, non-governmental or-

ganizations, and unaffiliated private citizens. Interested members of the public who were not able to attend the meetings in person were able to participate remotely over the telephone or by using new web conferencing technology.



The NRC will be hosting one additional public meeting to allow stakeholders opportunities to ask questions about the proposed rule and related guidance changes. This meeting will be held in Rockville,

MD on September 17, 2009 from 12:30pm – 4:30pm. Teleconferencing and web conferencing will be available. Please see the [meeting notice](#) for information on how to join the meeting remotely.

Members of the public are encouraged to read the documents and make comments through www.regulations.gov, Docket ID: NRC-2008-0122.

After the comment period ends on October 19, 2009, comments will be resolved and considered for incorporation into the final rule and guidance. The Commission will vote to issue a final rule and guidance, which will then be published in the *Federal Register* and disseminated through a series of public meetings.

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NRC Evaluates the Use of Web Conferencing Technology

Attendance at the public meetings in June was not limited to only those people who could be at the meeting locations in-person. Interested members of the public were also able to participate in the meetings via the use of teleconferencing and web conferencing technologies.

Web participants were able to attend the meetings from the comfort and convenience of their office (or living room). Participants logged on to an internet based conference center. Presentations and live videos of the meeting were then transmitted over the internet to web participants.

Web conferencing offered several benefits to participants. By eliminating the need for travel, the use of web conferencing technology allowed participants to reduce time, labor, and travel costs.

Some state and local organizations found the web conferencing to be particularly useful because multiple people could gather in the same location (such as an Emergency Operations Center), watch the meeting, ask questions, and converse about the meeting – in real time. In these situations, more people were able to participate than would have been possible had everyone needed to travel to the meeting.

The Office of Nuclear Security & Incident Response's (NSIR) "pilot" of web conferencing during the June public meetings was part of an overall NRC evaluation of virtual meeting technologies. NSIR plans to incorporate web conferencing into the upcoming public meeting on the proposed rulemaking for Emergency Preparedness on September 17, 2009.

September is National Preparedness Month

September 2009 is the sixth annual National Preparedness Month. The theme for this year is: **Are You Ready or Are You *READY?*** The focus is on changing perceptions and helping Americans to focus on what it truly means to be ready. National Preparedness Month is sponsored by the Ready Campaign and Citizen Corps. For more information, please visit: www.ready.gov

Update on NRC Participation in Hostile Action-Based Drills

The Hostile Action-Based Emergency Preparedness (HAB EP) Drill initiative will be ending at the close of Calendar Year 2009. The drill at Palo Verde in December will be the final drill in this phase of the HAB EP initiative.

The HAB EP initiative was voluntary for industry participants. It provided NRC staff the opportunity not only to observe a variety of drills, but also to participate in them. By the end of 2009, NRC Headquarters and Re-

gional staff will have participated in HAB EP drills in each NRC Region.

To date, the NRC Headquarters Operations Center and Regional Incident Response Organizations have participated in HAB EP drills in three of the four NRC Regions: Three Mile Island Station in Region I, Turkey Point Station in Region II, and Byron Station in Region III. The final full-scale NRC Headquarters Operations Center observation and participation in a HAB EP drill will occur in November 2009 with the River Bend Station in Region IV.

Through these drills, the NRC has exercised its incident response functions and has discovered areas for enhancement opportunities. Licensee notification and interface procedures have been refined – better addressing the stressful conditions encountered during a postulated hostile attack at a nuclear power plant. Three Mile Island's proximity to NRC's Region I office allowed a regional team to deploy to the site and integrate with the

Incident Command Post. Through this integration, NRC's regional staff identified possible roles for the NRC to play in a Unified Command structure. The NRC's participation in the Turkey Point HAB EP drill accomplished the agency's goal of practicing clear and concise communications with the site, as outlined in NRC Regulatory Issue Summary 2009-10, "Communications Between the NRC and Reactor Licensees During Emergencies and Significant Incidents" (ADAMS Accession ML091480101).

Many lessons-learned were identified and program enhancements were made as a result of the HAB EP drills conducted over the past three years. Moving forward, the NRC will be continuing to evaluate the lessons and enhancements that occurred in the drills over the past three years. The goal is for HAB scenarios to be incorporated as a part of future biennial exercises through the proposed NRC EP rule and guidance changes.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the EP Community

NRC Public Meeting on EP Proposed Rule & Related Guidance Changes
September 17, 2009, 12:30pm—4:30pm
Rockville, MD

22nd Annual Regulatory Information Conference (RIC)
March 9-11, 2010
Rockville, MD
<http://www.nrcric.org>