UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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FOR THE RECORD

PRESSURIZED THERMAL SHOCK AND PALISADES

On March 7, the NRC issued a press release announcing a March 19 webinar to discuss the concept of pressurized thermal shock and what it means for the Palisades nuclear plant located in Michigan. Subsequent media generated some confusion about the implications of this issue for the plant.

Pressurized thermal shock could occur if a rare accident results in a large amount of cold water rapidly cooling the metal vessel holding the reactor core. This rapid cooling increases the stresses on the vessel and could challenge the vessel's integrity.

Some media reports implied the plant is in danger of shutting down permanently and that the issue is something new, representing immediate danger to the plant.

In fact, extensive research by the NRC, independent laboratories and industry experts has shown the issue is not a current safety concern and does not require any current repairs; it is a regulatory issue. The NRC has required Palisades, and all other plants with pressurized water reactors, to evaluate and track this issue for decades, to make sure they meet NRC requirements. Palisades is operating safely and its reactor vessel conforms to the NRC's safety requirements.

This is not a new issue. Entergy is aware the NRC requires the plant to demonstrate that the reactor vessel will continue to operate safely beyond 2017, when the plant will reach a regulatory limit established to ensure the vessel will remain safe even in an extreme accident situation.

We are holding the webinar to address concerns and misconceptions about the implications of this issue for Palisades. At that time, we will also communicate to the public how the agency will continue to make sure the reactor vessel remains safe going forward.