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NRC Issues White Finding to Waterford 3 Nuclear Power Plant

The Waterford 3 nuclear power plant will receive additional oversight from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission based on an inspection finding of low to moderate safety significance for failing to ensure the operability of an exhaust fan in a room housing the plant's emergency diesel generators. The plant, located in Killona, La., is operated by Entergy Operations, Inc.

The violation involved a failure by the licensee to establish an adequate test program to demonstrate that a safety-related component would perform satisfactorily in service. Entergy officials did not conduct adequate testing to demonstrate that an exhaust fan in a room housing one of the plant's emergency diesel generators would function properly.

The fan is necessary to keep the diesels, which supply emergency electrical power to safety-related equipment under some emergency conditions, from overheating. The licensee has taken corrective action to ensure the fan will function as intended. Had one of the plant's emergency diesel generators failed, other means existed to provide emergency electrical power to vital plant equipment.

“While the licensee's failure to appropriately test the equipment in this instance did not have an impact on public safety, we expect licensees to demonstrate through proper testing the reliability of safety equipment to ensure the plant can adequately respond to an event,” Region IV Administrator Marc L. Dapas said.

The NRC staff issued a preliminary finding in an [inspection report](#) issued on Jan 30. The licensee declined the opportunity for a regulatory conference.

The NRC evaluates regulatory performance at commercial nuclear power plants with a color coded process that classifies findings as green, white, yellow or red, in order of increasing safety significance.

The issuance of the white finding will result in the plant moving from the Licensee Response Column of the agency's Action Matrix to the Regulatory Response Column. This will result in increased inspections and regulatory oversight until the agency is satisfied the relevant issues have been properly evaluated and satisfactory corrective actions have been developed and implemented.