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CONTACT: Victor Dricks (817) 200-1128
Lara Uselding (817) 200-1519

NRC Schedules Regulatory Conference to Discuss Apparent Violations at Arkansas Nuclear

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with officials from Entergy Operations on Oct. 28 to discuss the safety significance of apparent violations related to flood protection which affect both units at Arkansas Nuclear One. The plant, operated by Entergy Operations, Inc., is located in Russellville, Ark.

The NRC evaluates regulatory performance at commercial nuclear plants with a color coded process that classifies inspection findings as green, white, yellow or red in order of increasing safety significance. The NRC has preliminarily determined that the violations have substantial safety significance, or are “yellow” for both units.

The flooding issue came to light following an incident that occurred at the plant on March 31, 2013. Workers were moving a 525-ton component out of the plant’s turbine building during a maintenance outage when a lifting rig collapsed, causing the component to fall, damaging a fire main in the Unit 1 turbine building. Fire pumps started and pumped water into the building. Some of this water leaked past degraded floor seals and flowed down onto the lowest level of the Unit 1 auxiliary building, covering the floor with two inches of water. Water also entered one of the safety-related pump rooms because a valve in an adjacent hallway was not fully closed.

Following the event, a comprehensive inspection of flood barriers was undertaken by the licensee and the NRC, and numerous deficiencies were identified and subsequently documented in an NRC inspection [report](#) issued on Sept. 9. Due to the degraded condition of numerous flood barriers, in the unlikely event of extreme flooding at the site, the NRC has preliminarily determined that significant amounts of water could potentially have entered the auxiliary buildings and vaults where fuel for the plant’s emergency diesel generators is stored.

The licensee has resolved the issue by replacing all of the degraded seals or parts, installing new penetration seals, implementing compensatory measures, or adding appropriate instructions to procedures to ensure the protection of vital safety-related equipment. The NRC has reviewed these corrective measures to ensure their adequacy.

The public is invited to attend the Oct. 28 regulatory conference which will begin at 9 a.m. at the NRC’s Region IV office at 1600 E. Lamar Blvd., in Arlington, Texas. NRC officials will answer questions from the public after the business portion of the conference. A telephone bridge will be available for the meeting by calling 1-888-606-5946 and entering passcode 4812102.

No decision on the final safety significance of the findings or any additional NRC actions will be made at the conference. That decision will be announced at a later date.