

No: III-15-009

April 8, 2015

CONTACT: Viktoria Mitlyng 630-829-9662
Prema Chandrathil 630-829-9663

NRC Schedules Meeting April 16 to Discuss Duane Arnold Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public meeting April 16 to discuss the agency's annual safety performance review of the Duane Arnold nuclear power plant. The plant is operated by NextEra Energy Duane Arnold LLC, and is located in Palo, Iowa, about eight miles northwest of Cedar Rapids.

The public meeting is scheduled for 6-8 p.m. at the Hiawatha Community Center, 101 Emmons St., in Hiawatha. Attendees can discuss with NRC staff members the plant's 2014 performance and the agency's oversight of the facility. The public will be able to observe the business meeting between the NRC and plant officials, and then participate in the question and comment period once the business portion has concluded.

"NRC inspectors spend a significant amount of time monitoring a wide range of plant activities to ensure the plant operates safely. Our hands-on approach is a key factor in protecting the public and environment," said NRC Region III Administrator Cynthia D. Pederson. "We hold public meetings near the plant every year to make our inspectors available and accessible to answer questions and have open discussions about NRC oversight with those who live near the plant."

Overall, the Duane Arnold facility operated safely in 2014. All performance indicators were "green" or of low safety significance; however the unit was under enhanced oversight for the first two quarters of 2014. This was due to two "white" or low to moderate findings in the area of mitigating systems that occurred in 2013. Mitigating systems are made up of key pieces of equipment and specific systems that must be available and reliable when needed. After conducting a supplemental inspection, the NRC found the plant had addressed the issues and returned the plant to Column 1, or normal oversight.

NRC inspectors also identified issues in the areas of human performance and problem identification and resolution. Specifically NRC inspectors found plant workers had evaluated problems using an inconsistent decision-making process. Corrective actions were taken and appear to address the evaluation issues however the NRC found the corrective actions to address the consistent process were not sufficient. As a result, the NRC will conduct an additional inspection to look into the plant staff's effort and progress to address the issue. The NRC expects the plant staff to discuss their corrective actions during the public meeting.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow,” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance. The NRC’s action matrix reflects overall plant performance and agency response. There are five columns in the matrix with Column 1 requiring a baseline level of inspections. A move to the other columns results in an increased level of NRC oversight and inspections.

This year Duane Arnold will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for all plants. Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md.

The [annual assessment letter](#) sent from the NRC Region III office to the company addresses the performance of the plant during 2014 and is available on the NRC website. The most current performance information for [Duane Arnold](#) is available on the NRC website.