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NRC TO HOLD TWO REGULATORY CONFERENCES ON JANUARY 11 TO DISCUSS PRELIMINARY WHITE AND PRELIMINARY YELLOW FINDINGS AT PALISADES NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold two regulatory conferences with Entergy Nuclear Operations on Wednesday, Jan. 11, to discuss two preliminary inspection findings issued to the plant. The plant is located in Covert, Mich., approximately 50 miles west of Kalamazoo.

The first meeting for the preliminary “white” finding is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. and the second for the preliminary “yellow” finding will begin at 1:30 p.m. Both meetings will take place at the NRC’s Region III office, 2443 Warrenville Rd. Suite 210, in Lisle, Ill. The public is invited to observe and will have an opportunity to talk with NRC officials after the business portion of the meetings.

The preliminary white finding of low-to-moderate safety significance is related to the service water system.

The system is comprised of three motor-driven pumps that are used to provide cooling to safety-related equipment, such as containment air coolers and diesel generators. Last August, one of the service water pumps failed due to cracking in one of the couplings. This was a repeat of a previous event in 2009. The NRC conducted a Special Inspection and preliminarily concluded the utility failed to prevent a recurrence of the cracking condition and failed to completely consider the properties of the steel material used in the coupling.

The preliminary yellow finding of substantial significance to safety is related to an electrical fault caused by personnel at the site. The electrical fault resulted in a reactor trip and the loss of half of the control room indicators, and activation of safety systems not warranted by actual plant conditions. This made the reactor trip more challenging for the operators and increased the risk of a serious event occurring. The NRC conducted a Special Inspection and preliminarily determined the actions and work preparation for the electrical panel work were not done correctly.

The two regulatory conferences are being held to discuss the preliminary findings and their safety significance, and to assist the NRC in making a final enforcement decision. No decisions will be made at these conferences. After the conferences, the NRC will review the information received and make a final determination on the safety significance of both findings.

The NRC's inspection reports detailing the findings are available online at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The number to access the preliminary white report is ML113330819. The number to access the preliminary yellow report is ML113330802.

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