

No: II-17-011

March 22, 2017

CONTACT: Roger Hannah 404-997-4417
Joey Ledford 404-997-4416

NRC To Conduct Special Inspection at Turkey Point Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission began a special inspection today at Florida Power & Light's Turkey Point nuclear power plant to assess the failure of a safety-related electrical bus that resulted in the plant declaring an alert.

The plant is located near Homestead, Fla., about 25 miles south of Miami.

On March 18, an electrical fault occurred in a Unit 3 switchgear room, resulting in the loss of a safety-related electrical bus and a reactor trip. Other safety systems functioned as required, ensuring adequate reactor cooling. There was no threat to local residents or the environment, and the alert, the second-lowest NRC emergency declaration, was terminated later that same day.

The electrical fault, which caused an arc flash, or small explosion, also damaged a nearby fire door, which may have left other safety systems vulnerable had there been a fire. A plant worker who was in the room was injured and was treated at a local hospital.

“This was an event that could have had serious safety consequences and we need to know more about what happened and why,” said NRC Region II Administrator Cathy Haney. “We felt a special inspection was warranted to gather more information and also determine if there are generic issues that may apply to other plants.”

The three-member special inspection team will be headed by a senior reactor inspector from the NRC's Region II office in Atlanta. The team will develop a detailed timeline of the event, review the plant response and operator actions as well as the design and operation of the fire protection features associated with the switchgear room. It will also review the plant's fire brigade and emergency preparedness response and assess FPL's actions to determine the root cause of the event.

The on-site portion of the inspection will take several days. A report documenting the results should be issued within 45 days of the completion of the inspection.