

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC STAFF SETS ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE WITH DUKE ENERGY TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATION AT CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a predecisional enforcement conference in Atlanta on Monday, July 12, to discuss with Duke Energy Corporation an apparent violation of NRC requirements related to the potential inoperability of the Standby Shutdown System at the Catawba Nuclear Station near York, South Carolina.

The meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. at the NRC's Region II office, located in the Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street on the 24th floor. It is open to observation by interested members of the public and news media representatives. NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from interested observers.

NRC officials said the apparent violation resulted from two Standby Shutdown System circuit breakers being placed in the wrong position following maintenance work on December 16, 1998. Those circuit breakers remained in the wrong position until Duke personnel discovered the error on December 29, at which time the breakers were re-positioned and the Standby Shutdown System was restored to operable status. However, from December 16 until December 29, the system may have been unable to perform its intended function without operator action.

The Standby Shutdown System provides alternate and independent methods of maintaining one or both units in a hot standby condition following certain events that might take normal systems out of service.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that a determination has been made that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. The purpose is to discuss the apparent violation, its causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out errors that may have been made in NRC inspection reports; and to enable the licensee to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a civil penalty, will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

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