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Contact: [Roger Hannah](#), 404-997-4417

[Joey Ledford](#), 404-997-4416

NRC Launches Special Inspection at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has launched a special inspection into the failure of a high pressure coolant injection discharge valve on Unit 3 of the Browns Ferry nuclear plant.

The plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority is located near Athens, Ala., about 32 miles west of Huntsville, Ala.

On Sept. 24, during routine testing, the high pressure coolant injection system unexpectedly pumped water into the reactor vessel instead of a storage tank, and TVA later determined that a failed nut on a valve allowed it to remain partially open.

Other plant systems responded as expected, but the valve failure prompted the NRC to begin the special inspection.

The inspection team will review the valve failure and TVA's actions as well as maintenance practices and the history of such valves.

The onsite portion of the inspection is expected to take several days. A report documenting the results of the inspection should be issued within 45 days of the completion of the inspection.