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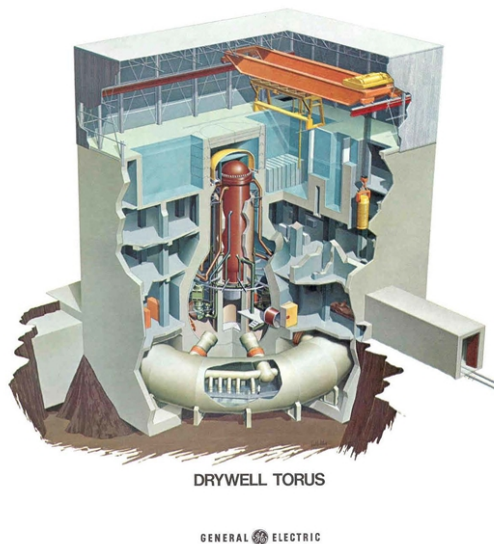
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NRC Launches Special Inspection at Fermi Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has launched a special inspection at the Fermi nuclear power plant to determine if degraded paint inside a portion of the reactor containment could impact certain safety systems in accident conditions.



During a recent engineering inspection, the NRC noted a degradation in the paint inside the torus, a donut-shaped component of the reactor containment located below the reactor vessel. Filled with water, the torus is designed to absorb energy from the reactor or supply water to safety systems during an accident. Loose paint chips from the torus could potentially impede the flow of water to safety-related equipment.

NRC's five-person inspection team will focus on establishing a sequence of events related to degraded paint in the torus; reviewing the plant's maintenance practices; and assessing the overall response since the discovery of the condition.

The inspectors will provide their preliminary conclusions regarding the significance of the issue in a publicly available report to be released approximately 45 days following completion of the inspection. The plant continues to operate safely.

The plant, operated by DTE Electric Company, is located in Newport, Mich., approximately 25 miles northeast of Toledo.

Graphic by General Electric