

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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PANEL RECOMMENDS NRC'S NEW REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROCESS
BE USED FOR ALL PLANTS

An independent panel has recommended that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's new reactor oversight program, now being tested at 13 nuclear power plants, be employed industry-wide.

The NRC began a pilot program to test the new oversight program on May 30, and created an independent panel to evaluate the program and consider whether any changes should be made before it is expanded to include all 103 operating reactors. The panel used 19 criteria to evaluate the results of the pilot program.

The Pilot Program Evaluation Panel included NRC staff from headquarters and regional offices, together with representatives of the Nuclear Energy Institute, participating nuclear power plant licensees, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety.

"The overall conclusion of the panel is that the framework provides a more objective, clear, and risk-informed approach to the oversight of nuclear reactors," the panel said in a report prepared for the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

The report identifies several issues to be addressed before the program is applied to all plants, currently scheduled for next April. This includes some issues relating to the accuracy and timeliness of plant performance data supplied by industry to NRC. The report says additional refinements can be made during the first year of expanded application.

Copies of the panel's final report, as well as transcripts of previous meetings, are available through the NRC's Public Document Room and at:
<http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/overview.html> on the NRC's home page.

The NRC staff will hold a public workshop on the oversight process in Washington, D.C. January 10-13, and provide a report with recommendations to the Commission in February. The Commission is expected to provide additional guidance to the staff prior to expanding its use at all sites.

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