

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road King of Prussia, PA 19406
Fax: 610/337-5241
Internet: dps@nrc.gov or nas@nrc.gov

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Contact: Diane Screnci (610/337-5330)
Neil A. Sheehan (610/337-5331)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC ISSUES PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR THREE MILE ISLAND 1 PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff, in its latest review of performance at the Three Mile Island 1 nuclear power plant, has found that safety performance at the facility remains acceptable. The plant is located in Middletown, Pa., and operated by GPU Nuclear Corp.

In a letter to the company outlining the results of the review, Wayne L. Schmidt, acting chief of the NRC Region I Division of Reactor Projects branch responsible for inspecting Three Mile Island 1, wrote that the plant was operated safely throughout the evaluation period of April 1998 through Jan. 15, 1999. "Conduct of operations was viewed as a strength," he said. "Control room operators responded well to several minor plant equipment problems and plant management provided good oversight of control room activities." Also, the program used to identify and fix problems functioned well and contributed to plant safety.

Overall, the plant's equipment was found to be in very good condition as a result of maintenance and testing activities. Engineering personnel provided good support to routine plant operations and responded well to several emergent equipment problems. Performance in the area of plant support continued to be consistently effective.

The NRC staff will conduct normal inspections during the next evaluation period, with supplemental inspections planned in the area of engineering safety evaluation development and on the control and prioritization of engineering work, which GPU Nuclear addressed as a result of past problems.

The text of the plant performance review (PPR) letter is available from the NRC Region I Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

PPRs are being used by the NRC as an interim measure to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) process until a new assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every 12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection

findings. This program will be tested at eight sites beginning in June and will be extended to all plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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