



NRC NEWS

**U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION III**

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NRC TO HOLD IOWA PUBLIC MEETINGS JULY 13-14 ON REACTOR OVERSIGHT CHANGES AND LATEST ASSESSMENT OF DUANE ARNOLD NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold two public meetings in Iowa to discuss, on July 13, the NRC's reactor oversight process and, on July 14, the latest performance review results for the Duane Arnold Energy Center. The nuclear power plant, operated by IES Utilities Inc., is located in Palo, Iowa.

The July 13 meeting will begin at 7 p.m. CDT at Cedar Rapids City Hall. The meeting will be held on the fourth floor of the City Hall which is located at 50 Second Ave. Bridge in Cedar Rapids. NRC officials will describe the new oversight program which began at the Duane Arnold plant in April. Members of the public will have the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting.

The new oversight process uses more objective, timely, and safety-significant criteria in assessing performance, while seeking to more effectively and efficiently regulate the industry. It also takes into account improvements in the performance of the nuclear industry over the past twenty years.

Under the new oversight program, inspections by NRC resident inspectors and regional office-based personnel are supplemented by statistical measures of plant activities called performance indicators. These performance indicators measure important safety aspects of plant operations, including the viability of redundant safety systems, emergency planning, radiation protection, and security measures.

Inspection findings and performance indicators for each nuclear power plant are posted on the NRC's internet web site every three months. The safety significance of each inspection finding or performance indicator is assessed with a color coding -- green, white, yellow, or red.

The NRC response to the inspection findings and performance indicators will be based on the assessment. A green finding would receive normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments would receive increasing NRC involvement. Multiple red findings could result in a plant shutdown.

The second NRC public meeting will be held at 9 a.m. CDT Friday, July 14, in the Training Building at the Duane Arnold Energy Center, 3363 DAEC Road in Palo. During the meeting, NRC staff members will discuss Duane Arnold's latest plant performance review results.

The Plant Performance Reviews (PPRs) are an interim measure the NRC has used to assess nuclear power plant safety while a reactor oversight process was being developed. The primary purpose of the PPRs is to evaluate safety performance information and identify any changes in plant performance so the NRC can allocate inspection resources appropriately. The text of each PPR letter, including the one on Duane Arnold, is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs and has been posted at: <<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>> on the NRC web site.

Current performance information for the Duane Arnold Energy Center is available on the NRC web site at: <<http://www.nrc.gov/ras>>.

A plain language summary of the new reactor oversight process is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs or on the web site at <<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>>.

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