



NRC NEWS

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

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NRC STAFF TO MEET WITH NUCLEAR MANAGEMENT CO. JAN. 30 TO DISCUSS INSPECTION FINDINGS AT KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet January 30 in Lisle, Illinois, with representatives of the Nuclear Management Company to discuss recent inspection findings at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Station, Kewaunee, Wisconsin.

Two sessions, called Regulatory Conferences, are planned with the company, both in the Third Floor Conference Room of the NRC's Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle. These meetings will discuss inspection findings that have been assessed as "white" and "yellow" in safety significance and apparent violations of NRC requirements associated with the findings. The NRC staff is seeking the company's evaluation of the inspection findings.

The meetings are open to public observation. Members of the NRC staff will be available after each session for questions and comments from members of the public.

The NRC uses a four-category rating system for its inspection findings, from green, through white and yellow, to red, depicting increasing safety significance. A similar rating system is used for the quarterly performance indicators, which are statistical measures of the safety performance of various plant functions.

A white inspection finding is one that has low to moderate safety significance. A yellow finding has substantial safety significance, and indicates a minimal reduction in the margin of safety.

The color assessments are used to determine the NRC's response to the findings. White and yellow findings and planned corrective actions will generally be discussed in public meetings with company officials. The NRC will also perform followup inspections to review the company's response.

The first session of the Kewaunee regulatory conference, at 10 a.m. CST, will cover a potential white finding associated with the strainers in the auxiliary feedwater system at the plant. The auxiliary feedwater system is a backup system which pumps water into the steam generators to remove heat from the reactor if the normal feedwater system is lost.

The strainers were designed to prevent foreign material from entering the system where it might

impede the water flow. The inspectors questioned whether the size of the holes in the strainers would allow sufficient water to pass through them. Other strainers in the system provide adequate protection, and the company subsequently removed the strainers in question.

The second session, at 1:30 p.m., will cover two inspection findings in the emergency preparedness area:

- From January 1999 through July of last year, the plant failed in 16 of 18 monthly drills to show it could staff all emergency response positions within the required time. The NRC staff determined, in an August inspection, that the utility had failed to take effective corrective action to deal with the emergency staffing deficiency. This finding was preliminarily determined to be white.
- An inspection in September of last year found that Kewaunee had not taken adequate corrective actions after reporting in January that its emergency siren system had a reliability of less than 90 percent. The siren system is intended to notify area residents in the event of an emergency. The inspection found that, while the reliability of the sirens had improved, the plant had not adequately determined and addressed the causes of the siren problems. The September inspection followed a earlier inspection in April to review the company's corrective actions for the siren problem. The NRC staff assessed this as a yellow finding.

Further information on these inspection findings, including the text of the inspection reports, is available on the NRC's web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/KEWA/kewa_pim.html>

Following the January 30 meetings, the NRC staff will continue its review of the findings and determine its final assessment of the inspection findings and the resulting actions by the agency. The outcome of the NRC staff's review of these findings, which normally takes four to six weeks, will be on the NRC's enforcement web page at:

<<http://www.nrc.gov/OE/>> Select the "enforcement actions" link.

Additional information on the NRC's reactor inspection and assessment program is on the web site at:

<<http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html>>.

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