



NRC NEWS

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

801 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. III-02-039

June 24, 2002

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REGULATORY CONFERENCE WITH NUCLEAR MANAGEMENT COMPANY ON POINT BEACH PLANT CANCELED

The meeting between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and representatives of Nuclear Management Company to discuss recent inspection findings at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Station, scheduled for June 25 in Lisle, Illinois, has been canceled. The meeting was previously announced in News Release III-02-038.

The Regulatory Conference had been scheduled to discuss the safety significance of the NRC's inspection findings associated with a February 12 emergency exercise at the Point Beach plant, located near Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

Rather than discuss the safety significance in the meeting, the company has elected to submit its views in writing on the safety significance.

NRC inspectors determined that the Point Beach staff inadequately critiqued two items during the emergency preparedness exercise. One item dealt with the initial Protective Action Recommendation (PAR) to offsite government officials. And the second dealt with the decision-making on the simulated removal of non-essential personnel, who were not members of the current shift of emergency responders, from the site.

The NRC staff had preliminarily evaluated the inspection findings as "white," meaning the findings were of low to moderate importance to safety. Once the utility submits its views, the NRC staff will issue its final determination on the safety significance.

Emergency preparedness drills and exercises are held to identify performance and procedural deficiencies through a critique process to ensure that corrective action takes place before these problems can occur during an actual emergency and have an adverse reaction on public health and safety. To make drills and exercises effective, the plant staff's critiques be thorough and self-critical.

Under its safety significance determination process, NRC officials classify certain conditions at nuclear power plants as being one of four colors which delineate increasing levels of safety significance, beginning with green and progressing to white, yellow or red.

A preliminary “white” determination for the emergency exercise critique was described in an inspection report issued April 30. The letter transmitting the report provided the company with an opportunity to request a regulatory conference to discuss the issue. Nuclear Management Company initially disagreed with the NRC’s evaluation of the problem’s safety significance and requested a regulatory conference. The company subsequently informed the NRC that it wished to submit its views in writing rather than participate in a Regulatory Conference.

A “white” finding may result in a future NRC inspections to review the company’s response to the inspection findings.

The notice to the utility of the final safety significance will be available on the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/enforcement/actions/reactors/>

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