



NRC NEWS

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NRC ORDERS MODIFICATIONS TO PRESSURIZED WATER REACTOR VESSEL HEAD INSPECTIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued an immediately effective Order to licensees operating pressurized water reactors (PWRs), establishing a minimum set of reactor pressure vessel (RPV) head inspection requirements. The Order is part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to ensure public health and safety following the discovery of degradation in the RPV head at the Davis-Besse reactor in Oak Harbor, Ohio.

The Order requires that licensees conduct bare metal visual examinations of the entire vessel head surface and non-visual examinations of each RPV head penetration. These enhanced inspection requirements maintain the graded approach described in a bulletin that the NRC issued on August 9 of last year (Bulletin 2002-02, "Reactor Pressure Vessel Head and Vessel Head Penetration Nozzle Inspection Programs"), in that licensees must increase the frequency of inspections as the head's susceptibility to degradation increases.

The Order is considered an interim measure until enhanced inspection requirements acceptable to the NRC are incorporated into the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code and related NRC regulations.

A copy of the entire Order will be posted on the NRC web site at:
<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/vessel-head-degradation/news.html>
under News and Correspondence.

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