



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC TO DISCUSS SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE OF INSPECTION FINDING AT OCONEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Duke Energy on Monday, September 13, in Atlanta to discuss the safety significance of NRC concerns with staffing in the event of a fire at the Oconee nuclear power plant. The plant is located near Seneca, S. C.

An NRC inspection in February found that Oconee fire response procedures were not consistent with the plant's licensing basis for manning of the Standby Shutdown Facility. That facility can provide alternative controls for some of the plant's systems should those functions be lost in the main control room. The NRC found that in some scenarios there may be a delay in the transfer of control to the alternate facility and resulting problems meeting NRC fire protection regulations.

The NRC staff's preliminary assessment concluded that the finding has "greater than very low safety significance" because it could affect fire protection defense in depth. However, it does not represent a current safety concern because Duke has modified plant procedures to address the issue.

The September 13th meeting, called a regulatory conference, allows Duke Energy to provide the NRC with any new information and to present its view of the issue's safety significance. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the NRC's Region II office in Atlanta, located on the 24th floor in the Atlanta Federal Center at 61 Forsyth Street. The public can observe the meeting, and NRC officials will be available before its conclusion to answer any questions.

The NRC evaluates regulatory performance at commercial nuclear power plants with a color-coded process which classifies inspection findings as either green, white, yellow or red, in order of increasing safety significance. The NRC preliminary evaluation found the safety significance of this issue to be "greater than green."

No final decision on the safety significance, any apparent violation or any enforcement action will be made during the regulatory conference. Information presented at the conference will be used by the NRC staff, along with the inspection findings, to determine the final safety significance of the problem. Those results will be posted on the NRC's web site at www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html#reactor.

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