



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of PPL Susquehanna, LLC, on Wednesday, April 6, to discuss the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Susquehanna nuclear power plant. The period of performance to be discussed is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2004.

PPL operates the twin-reactor plant, which is located in Berwick, Pa.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. at the Susquehanna Energy Information Center, 634 Salem Blvd. in Berwick. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Susquehanna plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/susq_2004q4.pdf. The meeting notice, with the agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML050700064. ADAMS is accessible via the agency's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available by contacting the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737 or by e-mail at PDR@nrc.gov.

Overall, the Susquehanna plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors

start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Because all of the inspection findings and performance indicators for the plant during 2004 were determined to be “green,” the Susquehanna plant will receive a baseline level of inspections during the upcoming assessment period.

In its mid-cycle letter dated Aug. 30, 2004, the NRC advised PPL that a “substantive cross-cutting issue,” a performance issue touching multiple program areas, still existed in the area of Problem Identification and Resolution involving weak evaluations of technical issues. Since then, the company has taken steps to improve its corrective action program and the NRC staff has determined the issue no longer exists due to a reduction in the frequency of findings related to this area.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are radiological safety, fire protection and the requalification program for licensed operators.

Current performance information for Susquehanna Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SUSQ1/susq1_chart.html .

Current performance information for Susquehanna Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SUSQ2/susq2_chart.html .

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