



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR LASALLE NUCLEAR POWER STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Company on Tuesday, May 17, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the LaSalle County Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located near Seneca, Ill.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. at Brookfield Township Hall, 2099 E. 27th Road, Seneca.

Before the meeting is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of the LaSalle plant, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe plant operation.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the LaSalle plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell 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 III 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: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/lasa_2004q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the LaSalle plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All of the NRC inspection findings and performance indicators for LaSalle during 2004 were determined to be "green." As a result of this performance, the NRC will conduct the normal, baseline level of inspections during the upcoming year.

During the year, however, NRC inspectors identified 10 instances where human performance was not adequate, although all of the incidents were of very low safety significance. The utility has

developed a comprehensive plan to address human performance errors, but it is too soon to determine the effectiveness of the plan.

Exelon is expected to discuss its efforts to improve human performance during the May 17 meeting and to submit a written report to the NRC.

Routine inspections at the LaSalle plant are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are fire protection, maintenance, emergency planning, problem identification and resolution, and environmental monitoring.

Current performance information for LaSalle is available on the NRC's web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LASA1/lasa1_chart.html and
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LASA2/lasa2_chart.html

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