



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PALISADES NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Co., on Wednesday, April 11, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located near Covert, Mich.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at Lake Michigan College, 125 Veteran Blvd, South Haven, Mich.

The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Palisades 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 at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/pali_2006q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Palisades 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 inspection findings and performance indicators for Palisades during 2006 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.

In the second quarter of 2006, there was one "white" performance indicator in the area of availability and reliability of systems required to mitigate the effects of an accident. The performance indicator returned to "green" after the second quarter. The NRC conducted a supplemental inspection to make sure the issues associated with the "white" performance indicator had been addressed.

Routine inspections 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 the replacement of reactor vessel head, alert and notification system testing, fire protection, and access control to radiologically significant areas.

Current performance information for Palisades is available on the NRC's web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PALI/pali_chart.html.

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