



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD MEETING ON MARCH 26 IN PLYMOUTH, MASS., TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR PILGRIM NUCLEAR PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct a public meeting on Thursday, March 26, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Pilgrim nuclear power plant.

The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn, 4 Home Depot Drive in Plymouth, Mass. Prior to its conclusion, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's performance, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility. In addition, an informational open house will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. at the same location. It will provide members of the public with an opportunity to discuss plant-related topics on a one-on-one basis with NRC inspectors assigned to the facility and their NRC Region I supervisor.

Pilgrim is a boiling-water reactor located in Plymouth. It is owned and operated by Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.

Overall, Pilgrim operated safely during 2008. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the NRC Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for the plant that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green." Therefore, for the rest of 2009 Pilgrim will receive the very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well. In 2008, the NRC devoted approximately 5,300 hours of inspection to the Pilgrim facility.

"In 2008, all but one of the 26 commercial power reactors in Region I, which covers the Northeastern United States, fully met our clearly defined performance criteria. Pilgrim was among those plants achieving those objectives. That means those plants will receive the normal level of NRC oversight this year if they continue meet the high safety benchmarks set out for each site," NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "That said, our inspectors will remain on the lookout for any problems or adverse trends that might indicate a change in performance. As always, we will not hesitate to act should we identify any safety concerns."

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year: During the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s web site, www.nrc.gov, every quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The meetings are in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment for the Pilgrim plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/pilg_2008q4.pdf. The notice for the annual assessment meeting is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML090680785. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC’s Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@NRC.GOV.

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at Pilgrim to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with problem identification and resolution, radiological safety, emergency preparedness and fire protection.

Current performance information for Pilgrim is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PILG/pilg_chart.html.

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