



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC ISSUES MID-CYCLE ASSESSMENTS FOR NATION'S NUCLEAR PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued mid-cycle assessment letters to the nation's 104 operating commercial nuclear power plants. The agency's most recent assessments show that all plants continue to operate safely.

"We ensure nuclear power plants are safe, inspecting them and rating their performance regularly, as part of our mission to protect people and the environment," said Bruce A. Boger, associate director for operating reactor oversight and licensing in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

For this assessment period, all 104 plants are in the two highest performance categories. There are five levels of plant performance based on a detailed assessment of performance indicators (e.g. safety system availability and reliability, control of radiation exposure and unplanned shutdowns) and inspection findings. Levels range from "meeting all safety cornerstone objectives" (highest level) to "unacceptable performance" (lowest level). Additional information on the Reactor Oversight Process is available at : <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1649/r4/> .

The latest round of assessments shows that 84 of the plants are performing at the highest level. If a nuclear power plant's performance declines, the NRC increases the level of inspection to ensure the plant operator is taking the steps necessary to correct the situation. The additional amount of inspection is commensurate with the level of plant performance.

Currently 20 plants are receiving additional inspection and attention, including Unit 1 at Arkansas Nuclear One, Arkansas; Units 1 and 2 at Calvert Cliffs, Maryland; Columbia Generating Station, Washington; Cooper, Nebraska; Duane Arnold, Iowa; Units 1 and 2 at Farley, Alabama; Ginna, N.Y.; Units 1 and 2 at Hatch, Georgia; Kewaunee, Wisconsin; Units 1 and 2 at McGuire, N.C.; Unit 2 at Nine Mile Point, N.Y.; Unit 1 at Oconee, S.C.; Palisades, Michigan; Units 1 and 2 at Prairie Island, Minnesota; and Unit 2 at San Onofre, California.

Every six months each plant receives either a mid-cycle review letter or an annual assessment letter, along with an NRC inspection plan. The next annual assessment letters will be issued in March 2010.

A list of each plant's current performance rating is available on the NRC Web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/actionmatrix_summary.html .

Updated information on plant performance is posted to the NRC Web site as it becomes available. The mid-cycle assessment letters sent to each licensee are available on the NRC Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/index.html> .

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