



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region IV  
612 E. Lamar Blvd., Suite 400  
Arlington, TX 76011-4125  
Telephone: (817) 860-8128

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Contact: Victor Dricks: (817) 860-8128  
Lara Uselding: (817) 276-6519

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E-Mail: [OPA4.Resource@nrc.gov](mailto:OPA4.Resource@nrc.gov)

## **NRC TO DISCUSS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AT SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting in Dana Point, Calif., on March 24, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS).

An "open house" will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. to provide an opportunity for people to meet informally with NRC staff. A formal meeting between the NRC staff and Southern California Edison Co. officials will begin at 7 p.m. during which the NRC staff will present its safety assessment of San Onofre. It will be followed by another informal session with an opportunity for people to ask questions about San Onofre issues. The meetings will be held at the Doubletree Guest Suites Doheny Beach, 34402 Pacific Coast Highway, Dana Point.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of San Onofre and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," said NRC Region IV Administrator Elmo Collins. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company as well as local officials and residents who live near the plant."

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2009 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/sano\\_2009q4.pdf](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/sano_2009q4.pdf).

Although SONGS Units 2 and 3 operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety and fully met all cornerstone objectives, the NRC is concerned that continuing performance problems are not being effectively addressed.

“The NRC continues to find problems with human performance and issues regarding the ability of workers to identify and resolve plant problems,” Collins said. “This is the fifth consecutive assessment cycle where substantive cross-cutting issues were identified in both of these areas. Corrective actions taken to address these issues have been ineffective.”

“Allegations at San Onofre are at 10 times the national median. Trends in allegations claiming discrimination and retaliation, as well as anonymous allegations, have increased significantly over previous years,” he said in his letter to Southern California Edison Co. officials. As a result, the NRC issued a “chilling effect” letter on March 2, requesting specific actions be taken to ensure San Onofre is a workplace that fosters an environment where employees feel free, and are encouraged, to raise safety concerns.

Therefore, in addition to the normal detailed inspections performed at every site, the NRC plans to conduct additional inspections during 2010 to verify that weaknesses in human performance, problem identification & resolution and safety conscious work environment are being addressed.

Inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region IV Office in Arlington, Texas.

Current performance information for San Onofre Unit Two is available on the NRC web site at: [http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SANO2/sano2\\_chart.html](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SANO2/sano2_chart.html).

Current performance information for San Onofre Unit 3 is available at: [http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SANO3/sano3\\_chart.html](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SANO3/sano3_chart.html).

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