



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING ON APRIL 14 IN SEABROOK, N.H. TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF SEABROOK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, April 14 regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Seabrook nuclear power plant during 2009.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. at the Galley Hatch Conference Center, located at the Best Western Inn at Hampton, 815 Lafayette Road, Hampton, N.H. Prior to the meeting's conclusion, there will be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of the NRC staff regarding the plant's performance, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

Seabrook, which is the site of a single pressurized-water reactor, is located in Seabrook, N.H. It is owned and operated by NextEra Energy Seabrook, LLC.

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to gauge plant performance. The colors start with "green," representing very low safety significance, and increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the significance of the issues involved.

Overall, Seabrook operated safely during 2009. At the conclusion of last year, there were no performance indicators for the plant that were other than "green". However, one "white" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding was identified in an NRC inspection report issued last August. That finding involved the inadequate design and improper installation of an emergency diesel generator cooling-water flange modification. This caused the generator to fail to operate during a test conducted in February 2009. The finding resulted in the plant receiving additional oversight from the NRC.

Specifically, the NRC in 2010 will conduct a supplemental inspection at Seabrook. This inspection will verify that NextEra fully understands the root cause for the performance issues associated with the "white" finding; has identified other safety systems that might be similarly affected by these issues; and has implemented sufficient corrective actions to prevent a recurrence. The finding will remain open until the NRC is satisfied those actions have been carried out.

In 2009, the NRC devoted approximately 5,500 hours to inspection of the Seabrook facility, including one major team inspection.

“Besides our normal thorough battery of inspections, Seabrook will receive additional attention from us this year as warranted by the finding involving the emergency diesel generator,” NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. “We expect NextEra to devote the resources and expertise necessary to resolve the issue, and we will provide additional scrutiny to ensure that is the case.”

The agency issues its review of performance at specific plants twice a year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s web site, www.nrc.gov, each quarter. Following the release of the annual performance reviews every March, the public is provided with an opportunity to discuss the results. The meetings, which are held in the vicinity of each plant, are in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment letter for the Seabrook plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/seab_2009q4.pdf. The notice for the annual assessment meeting for the plant is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML100840397. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.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.Resources@NRC.GOV.

Routine inspections are carried out by 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 at Seabrook to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness, radiation safety and the plant’s problem identification and resolution program.

Current performance information for Seabrook is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SEAB1/seab1_chart.html.

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