



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SCHEDULES MEETING TO DISCUSS 2009 PERFORMANCE OF BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, June 3, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2009 at the Browns Ferry nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, is in Athens, Ala., about 32 miles west of Huntsville.

The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. CDT with a presentation on the safety performance of the Browns Ferry plant during 2009, as well as a brief discussion of the NRC's oversight and inspection program. After the presentation there will also be a question and answer session. The meeting will be in the Browns Ferry Training Center Auditorium at the plant site (10833 Shaw Road in Athens).

"Every year, the NRC evaluates the safety performance of nuclear plants in a systematic and detailed way," NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes said. "These reviews allow us to respond to ongoing issues, if needed, and to plan our future inspections. This open house gives local officials and citizens near the Browns Ferry plant an opportunity to learn more about our oversight and is consistent with our commitment to openness and transparency."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II 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: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/bf_2009q4.pdf.

The NRC found that the Browns Ferry plant overall operated safely during 2009, and the plant would have been subject this year to the very detailed inspections required at all plants, but recent events have changed the plant's oversight status.

Two recent inspection findings related to fire protection have increased the NRC's oversight and the agency plans a supplemental inspection of those issues this year.

In addition, the NRC has a concern with the plant's progress in addressing the area of problem identification and resolution. TVA has entered the issue in its corrective action program and the NRC will continue to monitor the plant's progress through the inspection program.

The NRC has also identified another issue in the area of a safety conscious work environment. The agency issued a confirmatory order late last year to address that area and will inspect TVA's actions to ensure that the Browns Ferry plant meets those requirements annually over the next four years.

The NRC plans some generic inspections at Browns Ferry this year as well including operator licensing examinations, managing gas accumulation in some safety systems, managing fatigue and ground water protection.

NRC inspections at Browns Ferry are conducted by resident inspectors assigned to the site, supplemented by more specific inspections completed by region-based NRC inspectors.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start with "green," which has very low safety significance, to "white," "yellow" or "red," based on the significance of the issues. Inspection findings and performance indicators are updated on the NRC's web site (www.nrc.gov) each quarter.

Current performance information for the three Browns Ferry units is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF1/bf1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF2/bf2_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF3/bf3_chart.html.

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