



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2009 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR DAVIS BESSE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT JULY 29

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company on Thursday, July 29, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station. The plant is located in Oak Harbor, Ohio, about 40 miles southeast of Toledo.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. EDT at the Davis-Besse Site Energy Education Center, 5501 North State Route 2, in Oak Harbor. The NRC staff will present the assessment results of the 2009 operating year and talk about the NRC and its range of activities at the plant. After the formal portion of the meeting, the NRC staff will be available to respond to questions or comments from the public about the plant's performance in 2009, as well as the response to nozzle cracking issues identified in 2010 as part of an NRC Special Inspection. The conclusions of NRC's Special Inspection, which was dispatched to evaluate the circumstances around the nozzle cracking issue and to independently assess the utility's nozzle testing and repair activities, will be discussed in a separate public meeting within the next couple of months after the Special Inspection Team concludes its work. Details of the meeting will be communicated to the public once they are finalized.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Davis-Besse plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius said. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and area residents. One of NRC's main goals is to explain to people in the community how the agency regulates nuclear power plants."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period 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/davi_2009q4.pdf

The NRC's assessment concluded Davis-Besse operated safely during the 2009 period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

NRC inspectors identified one "white" finding of low to moderate safety significance in 2009. This finding involved the failure to declare an Alert, the second lowest of NRC's four emergency classifications, in a timely manner. After an explosion in the switchyard caused by an electrical fault to a voltage measuring device, operators failed to assess and classify the situation in accordance with the Davis-Besse Emergency Plan procedures. The failure to declare an Alert could affect the ability of the plant and offsite authorities to ensure timely and appropriate response to an emergency. The NRC will conduct a supplemental inspection to make sure the problems surrounding the finding have been fully understood and resolved by the plant.

Davis-Besse will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for nuclear plants. Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. In addition to the supplemental inspection, the areas of plant operation to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are independent spent fuel storage facility operation, license renewal, problem identification and resolution, and fire protection.

Current performance information for Davis-Besse is available on the NRC's Web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DAVI/davi_chart.html.

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