



NRC NEWS

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NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT CATAWBA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is beginning a special inspection this week at Duke Energy's Catawba nuclear power plant to assess the circumstances surrounding an event last Wednesday (April 4) that resulted in both of the plant's units losing offsite power.

The plant is located near York, S.C., about 18 miles south of Charlotte, N.C.

One of the two units at the plant was already shut down for an outage and the other unit automatically shut down. The plant's emergency diesel generators started and provided power to the plant's safety systems, which operated as needed. Plant employees were able to return offsite power a few hours later, but the event was reported as an Unusual Event, the lowest of four NRC emergency classifications for nuclear plants..

"While there were no immediate safety implications, the loss of offsite power at a nuclear plant is always significant," said Victor McCree, NRC Region II Administrator. "We want to make sure we completely understand what happened and felt that under these circumstances, a special inspection was needed."

The NRC's resident inspectors at Catawba immediately began assessing the incident, and have continued to monitor the plant staff's activities. The Special Inspection Team will be composed of a total of three inspectors from the NRC's Region II offices in Atlanta. The team will, among other things, develop a timeline, review Duke Energy's actions leading up to the event and evaluate the company's response.

The on-site portion of the inspection will take several days. A report documenting the results should be issued within 45 days of the completion of the inspection.

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