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2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

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Contact: Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662
Prema Chandrathil (630) 829-9663

E-Mail: OPA3.RegionIII@nrc.gov

NRC BEGINS SPECIAL INSPECTION AT PALISADES NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has started a Special Inspection to review a leak from a control rod drive mechanism inside the containment building. The leak has not resulted in a release of radiation to the environment and is not a threat to public health and safety. The plant is in a shutdown condition and will remain so until the leak has been fixed.

The plant is operated by Entergy Nuclear Operations and is located in Covert, Mich., about 40 miles west of Kalamazoo.

The three member inspection team will begin work Wednesday and look into the circumstances surrounding the leak. They will review the utility's monitoring of the leak and subsequent plant shutdown, verify the adequacy of radiological controls, evaluate any potential degradation, and review the plant's repair actions. The team will also review the plant's reporting requirements and their plan for addressing the cause of the event.

Since July, the NRC has been monitoring a gradual increase of unidentified leakage. The plant is required to be shut down when the unidentified leak rate exceeds 1 gallon per minute (gpm). At the point of shutdown, the unidentified leakage was about 0.3 gpm. On Aug. 12, the utility shutdown, entered containment and determined the leak was from an area located on one of the control rod drive mechanisms. The limit for this area is 0 gpm. The plant will need to fix the leak before returning to operation.

NRC inspectors have been and continue to closely follow the plant's repair activities and corrective actions. On Monday, an additional NRC inspector, well versed in engineering repair codes, was dispatched to further observe and inspect the plants actions.

The NRC's special inspection report will be available within 45 days of the inspection's completion of through the NRC RIII Office of Public Affairs or through the [Agencywide Documents Access and Management System](#) (ADAMS) at the NRC website.

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