



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO HOLD OPEN HOUSE ON APRIL 2nd IN SALEM, N.J., TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS FOR SALEM AND HOPE CREEK NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public open house on Tuesday, April 2, to discuss the agency's annual review of safety performance at the Salem and Hope Creek nuclear power plants.

During the open house, which is scheduled for 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the PSEG Energy & Environmental Resource Center, at 244 Chestnut St. in Salem, attendees will have an opportunity to hold one-on-one discussions with NRC staff members about the plants' 2012 performance and the agency's oversight of the facilities. NRC staff on hand will include the inspectors assigned to the plants on a full-time basis and their supervisor.

Overall, the Salem and Hope Creek plants -- located in Hancocks Bridge (Salem County) and operated by PSEG Nuclear, LLC -- operated safely during 2012. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the NRC's Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for the plants that were other than "green" (very low risk) and no inspection findings that were "greater than green" (that is, none of the findings exceeded very low safety significance). As a result, Salem and Hope Creek will continue to receive the NRC's normal level of oversight during 2013, barring any changes.

The normal level of oversight for plants meeting NRC performance criteria consists of a detailed regime involving thousands of hours of inspection. In 2012, the agency devoted approximately 5,400 hours of inspection to the Salem plant and approximately 5,200 hours of inspection to the Hope Creek plant.

Salem and Hope Creek had one or more "greater than green" inspection findings in the area of security, first identified in the fourth quarter of 2011 and finalized in the first quarter of 2012, causing both plants to receive increased NRC oversight. However, the issues were closed out in the fourth quarter of 2012 after the agency concluded the concerns had been properly evaluated and appropriate corrective actions put in place.

“When the time comes to evaluate a plant’s performance for the previous year, we take a fresh look at any and all issues that might be of concern. We then adjust our plans for assessing the facility accordingly,” NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. “As we map out our inspection plans for the remainder of 2013, we remain focused on ensuring that safety is the foremost objective for all plant operators.”

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors begin with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the risk significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at each plant twice a year: during the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the 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 reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The sessions are in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with respect to its activities.

The annual assessment letter for the Salem plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/salm_2012q4.pdf , while the letter for the Hope Creek plant can be found at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/hope_2012q4.pdf . The notice for the open house is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML13073A201. ADAMS is available at: <http://adams.nrc.gov/wba/> . 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.Resource@nrc.gov.

Routine inspections are carried out by the 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 of performance to be inspected this year at Salem by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, problem identification and resolution, and permanent plant modifications. For the Hope Creek plant, areas of inspection will include fire protection, emergency preparedness and the dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel.

Current performance information for Salem Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SALM1/salm1_chart.html . Current performance information for Salem Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/SALM2/salm2_chart.html . Current performance information for Hope Creek is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HOPE/hope_chart.html .

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