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NRC Approves Changes to Fort Calhoun Nuclear Plant's Emergency Planning Requirements

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has granted the Omaha Public Power District's request to alter the emergency preparedness plan for the Fort Calhoun Station nuclear power plant in Washington County, Neb., to reflect the plant's decommissioning status.

The changes come in the form of exemptions from certain NRC requirements that may not be appropriate for a plant that has permanently ceased operations. Once the licensee implements the exemptions, state and local governments may rely on comprehensive emergency management ("all hazard") planning for off-site emergency response to events at Fort Calhoun, rather than having a dedicated offsite radiological emergency response plan. As a result, there will not be a 10-mile emergency planning zone identified in Fort Calhoun's license. The plant will maintain an onsite emergency plan and response capabilities, including the continued notification of state government officials of an emergency declaration.

OPPD provided analyses to show the exemptions are warranted because when compared to an operating power reactor, the risk of an offsite radiological release is significantly lower and the types of possible accidents significantly fewer at a nuclear power reactor that has permanently ceased operations and removed fuel from the reactor vessel. The NRC staff evaluated and confirmed these analyses and, based on the [NRC staff's evaluation and recommendation](#), the Commission [approved the exemptions](#) Oct. 25. The exemptions were granted and a safety evaluation issued Dec. 11, and license amendments reflecting the exemptions were issued Dec. 12. Under the exemptions, OPPD may not implement the changes to its emergency preparedness plans until April 7, 2018, based on the company's evaluation of applicable accidents.

Fort Calhoun, a single pressurized-water reactor, began operations in 1973. It ceased operations Oct. 24, 2016. All spent fuel has been permanently moved from the reactor vessel into the spent fuel pool for storage. The exemptions from certain emergency preparedness requirements are part of several changes to the plant's licensing basis and technical specifications the licensee requested to reflect Fort Calhoun's decommissioning status.