NRC NEWS

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NRC INSPECTION TEAM TO REVIEW LOSS OF OFFSITE POWER EVENT AT CATAWBA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is sending a team of inspectors to the Catawba nuclear power plant, operated by Duke Energy Corporation near Rock Hill, S.C., to review circumstances associated with an unexpected loss of power from offsite sources to both of the facility's nuclear reactors on Saturday, May 20. Emergency onsite power sources operated to support the reactor shutdown.

NRC officials said preliminary information indicated an electrical fault in the Catawba switch yard caused several electrical circuit breakers to open, resulting in a loss of offsite electrical power to both reactors. Both units underwent automatic shutdowns from 100 percent power when their reactor protection systems reacted to the loss of offsite power as designed.

As required by the plant's emergency plan, the company on Saturday declared an Unusual Event, the lowest of four emergency classifications, at 2:14 p.m. (EDT). The company terminated the declaration of an Unusual Event on Sunday, May 21, at 1:40 a.m. (EDT) following restoration of normal power.

The NRC said a special Augmented Inspection Team, used by the NRC to review more serious events, will arrive at the site on Tuesday, May 23 to review circumstances associated with the event.

Both reactors at Catawba remain safely shut down and are being monitored by NRC resident inspectors stationed at the plant.

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