



NRC NEWS

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630)829-9663/e-mail: rjs2@nrc.gov
Pam Alloway-Mueller (630)829-9662/e-mail: pla@nrc.gov

NRC STAFF CONCLUDES D. C. COOK IMPROVEMENTS SUFFICIENT FOR STARTUP OF UNIT 1

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that the performance improvements and plant modifications at the D. C. Cook Nuclear Power Station are sufficient for Unit 1 at the plant to resume operations and operate safely. The two-reactor facility, operated by American Electric Power Co., is at Bridgman, Michigan.

The utility is completing its final preparations for restart of Unit 1. NRC inspectors will monitor the startup on a round-the-clock basis until the plant is operating routinely.

Both units at the plant were shut down in September 1997 as a result of NRC inspection findings which questioned the capabilities of key plant emergency systems to meet their design requirements. Since then, the utility has completed major reviews of plant safety systems and corrected problems which were identified.

Unit 2 at the plant resumed operations in June and has operated continuously since startup.

Since the September 1997 shutdown, numerous inspections have been performed by the NRC resident inspectors and by inspectors based in the regional offices and NRC headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. These inspections have focused on the improvements being made at the plant and on the readiness of plant safety systems and the plant staff to resume operation.

An NRC Restart Oversight Panel, composed of managers and staff members from the regional and headquarters offices, will continue to monitor the performance of Unit 1 as it resumes operations. This panel has held periodic meetings, open to the public, to review the status of activities at the plant.

The NRC staff has begun the transition of the Cook plant to the agency's new Reactor Oversight Process. The new inspection and assessment process was implemented for all other nuclear power plants earlier this year, but the Cook units were deferred. The transition will be completed after the plant has sufficient operating experience to generate the performance indicator statistics that are part of the new process.

The letter from NRC Regional Administrator Jim Dyer to American Electric Power on the NRC's restart determination is on the NRC's web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/reports>

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