



NRC NEWS

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NRC DISPATCHES INSPECTION TEAM TO CALLAWAY

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched a fact-finding inspection team to the Callaway nuclear plant today to look into circumstances surrounding the malfunction of an auxiliary feedwater pump. Callaway, operated by Ameren UE, is located near Fulton, Missouri. Callaway plant is currently being shut down as a precaution so that Ameren UE workers may safely check the feedwater system and repair it as necessary.

The inspection team, referred to as an augmented inspection team, consists of four inspectors from the NRC regional office in Arlington, Texas, and NRC headquarters in Rockville, Md. Auxiliary feedwater pumps, which are required by NRC regulations to be available for operation while the plant is operating, are important components of the plant's safety system because they are relied upon to supply cooling water to the steam generators if the main feedwater pumps are not operating. Steam generators remove heat from the reactor and send steam to the electrical generator.

NRC made the decision to send an augmented inspection team when Ameren UE workers, who were investigating a December 3 malfunction of one auxiliary feedwater pump, recently discovered that pieces of debris from a degraded seal in the condensate storage tank had the potential to affect all three auxiliary feedwater pumps. The condensate storage tank is the common water supply for all three auxiliary feedwater pumps.

A smaller, special inspection team had arrived at Callaway on January 28 to review the initial, single feedwater pump malfunction. This team is being expanded in scope and resources to an augmented inspection team as a result of the evidence from the condensate storage tank.

The inspection team will develop a complete description of the sequence of events related to the pump malfunction, review Ameren UE's determination of the cause of the problem and determine to what extent the degraded tank seal could have affected other plant equipment.

The results of the inspection will be discussed at a public meeting to be scheduled on completion of the fact-finding inspection. A written report of the team's findings will be issued within 30 days of the that meeting.

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