



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL INSPECTION AT VERMONT YANKEE TO LOOK INTO POTENTIALLY MISSING SPENT FUEL SEGMENTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has initiated a special inspection at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant to look into potentially missing spent fuel segments at the facility. The plant, which is operated by Entergy Nuclear, is located in Vernon, Vt.

NRC Resident Inspectors, while performing a spent fuel pool accountability inspection, questioned plant officials regarding aspects of their procedures for the verification of older fuel assemblies.

Vermont Yankee formally notified the NRC yesterday that two short spent fuel rod segments were not in the spent fuel pool in the location specified in documents. The segments are described as about 7 inches long and 17 inches long. Both are approximately the diameter of a pencil. These segments had been placed in a special container at the bottom of the spent fuel pool in 1980. The company has also told the agency it will undertake a comprehensive search of the pool and perform a records review in an effort to determine the location of the missing segments.

NRC's Resident Inspectors at Vermont Yankee have been closely following the company's efforts through onsite inspection. NRC officials in the Region I office in King of Prussia, Pa., and at its headquarters in Rockville, Md., have also been following this issue closely.

This situation does not pose a threat to public health and safety as it is highly unlikely that the material is in the public domain. Given the extensive array of radiation detectors at the site, it is very probable that the potentially missing fuel fragments are in a location designed to deal with radioactive waste. If they were removed from the site, this could only have occurred in heavily shielded, sealed containers directed to other controlled, safe locations.

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The NRC has been, and will continue to be, in contact with the State of Vermont and other officials to keep them apprised of the situation and our inspections.

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