



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW SAFETY CULTURE SURVEY FOR POINT BEACH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Co. on Thursday, March 23, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Plant. The two-reactor facility is located at Two Rivers, Wis.

The NRC staff and Nuclear Management Co. representatives will also meet separately to review the results of the company's safety culture survey of the staff at the Point Beach plant.

Both meetings, which are open to public observation, will be held in the Two Creeks Town Hall, 5128 E. Tapawingo Rd. The Town Hall is at the intersection of Tapawingo Road and Highway 42 north of Two Rivers.

The annual performance meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m., and the safety culture meeting is scheduled for 1 p.m. Before each meeting is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public.

"The Point Beach plant continues to operate safely," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. "While it has been under heightened NRC scrutiny since 2003 as a result of significant safety issues with a backup cooling system, we have seen improvements in performance during the past year," he added.

"The performance meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant," Mr. Caldwell continued. "Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

The afternoon meeting will cover a late 2004 survey of plant employees to evaluate their attitudes toward safety and ability to raise safety issues. Nuclear Management Co. officials will discuss their actions to address issues raised in the survey.

In previous years, the NRC has noted performance issues at Point Beach in the areas of Problem Identification and Resolution – how the plant staff finds, evaluates, and corrects problems – and in human performance.

NRC inspections during 2005 determined that the plant had made improvements in both of these areas, called “cross-cutting issues.” The number and significance of Human Performance related events declined during 2005, and an in-depth NRC inspection of Problem Identification and Resolution activities showed improvements in this “cross-cutting” area. As a result, the NRC will reduce its focus on these two areas of past concern.

A letter sent from the NRC Region III Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/poin_2005q4.pdf.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness, radioactive material handling and transportation, problem identification and resolution, radiation protection, and fire protection.

Current performance information for Point Beach is available on the NRC’s web site at: (Unit 1) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/POIN1/poin1_chart.html and (Unit 2) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/POIN2/poin2_chart.html.

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