



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. IV-06-003

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March 29, 2006

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE AT PALO VERDE NUCLEAR PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with Arizona Public Service Co. officials on April 5, to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station during 2005.

The 6:30 p.m. meeting at Saddle Mountain Unified School District Administration Building Board Room, 38201 W. Indian School Road, in Tonopah, Az., is open to public observation. Before the session ends, NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation.

"Each year, the NRC assesses the performance of all of the nation's commercial nuclear power plants," said Region IV Administrator Bruce S. Mallett. "The meeting gives us an opportunity to discuss our findings with the company, local officials and members of the public. We look forward to meeting with members of the community and answering any questions they may have about our oversight."

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2005 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/palo_2005q4.pdf.

Palo Verde has been under increased NRC scrutiny since 2004 when problems with voiding in a portion of a suction line for the plant's emergency core cooling system were identified. "Improvements have been noted in identifying and resolving problems and in human performance at the site, but not sufficient for the NRC to decrease our oversight in these areas," Mallett said. "We plan to discuss some of these during the meeting."

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region IV Office in Arlington, Texas, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. In addition to routine inspections, the NRC plans to perform a

follow-up supplemental inspection to determine that actions have been taken to correct problems regarding air trapped in portions of the emergency core cooling system at all three units.

Current information for Palo Verde is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PALO1/palo1_chart.html .

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