



NRC NEWS

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NRC CONDUCTING SPECIAL INSPECTION AT SAN ONOFRE NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is conducting a special inspection at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in response to the failure of an emergency diesel generator during testing last month. The plant, operated by Southern California Edison Co., is located in San Clemente, Calif.

“The licensee has corrected the problem, believed to have been caused by an improperly installed electrical connector on the diesel generator,” said Region IV Administrator Elmo E. Collins. “But it appears they were slow to understand the implications of what happened and we want to know why.”

Emergency diesel generators are used to supply electrical power to plant safety systems in the event of a loss of off-site power. The NRC requires they be tested monthly to ensure operability.

Operators encountered problems during testing of the emergency diesel generator on three occasions in late December. They corrected the problem, but may not have taken action promptly enough to satisfy regulatory requirements.

A two-person team of NRC specialists will review the circumstances related to the emergency diesel generator failures, the licensee’s root cause evaluation and determine whether similar conditions exist with other electrical equipment. The team consists of a reactor inspector from the NRC’s Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, and the senior resident inspector permanently assigned to the site.

The inspection will begin today and is expected to take several days. The team will write a report about 30 – 45 days after completion of the inspection. The report will be available on the agency’s online document library at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>.

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