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NRC CITES PERRY NUCLEAR PLANT FOR ISSUES INVOLVING RADIOLOGICAL CONTROLS

Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued violations of low to moderate safety significance to Perry Nuclear Power Plant which will result in additional NRC oversight. The plant is operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co. and is located in Perry, Ohio, about 35 miles northeast of Cleveland.

The NRC evaluates a nuclear plant's performance with a color coded process that classifies regulatory findings as green, white, yellow or red, in order of increasing safety significance. After consideration of the information the NRC staff has characterized the inspection finding as "white" or as having a low to moderate safety significance.

The violations involved the failure of Perry personnel to make adequate preparations for retracting a radioactive source range monitor from the reactor core that could have resulted in an overexposure to workers performing this activity. A source range monitor measures nuclear reactions during start up, low power operations and shutdown conditions.

On April 21, while four workers were retracting the monitor from the reactor core they detected a rapid increase in radiation levels. They stopped the activity and immediately left the area. At the time, the plant was shut down for a refueling outage.

A NRC Special Inspection team was dispatched to the plant on April 25, to review the circumstances surrounding the incident and impact on the workers.

"Even though there was no overexposure to the workers, no impact on the safety of the plant or the public, plant staff failed to conduct an adequate radiological evaluation of the activity and to implement necessary controls to eliminate a potential for overexposure" said Region III Administrator Mark Satorius. "We have inspected the plant's actions to make sure plant staff are prepared to conduct activities in accordance with safety requirements and we will conduct additional inspections to ensure plant activities continue to be performed safely."

In addition to the source range monitor violations Perry has had other incidents involving the same area of weaknesses with the control of radiation exposure to certain workers in the plant. Taken together, these occurrences will result in significantly increased NRC oversight. The NRC will conduct further comprehensive team inspections to look at the plant's ability to assess and plan for activities involving elevated radiation levels for workers and their ability to identify and resolve problems.

The utility workers will also have to understand why these issues occurred, develop corrective and preventive actions, and implement them. The NRC will inspect Perry's efforts in this area and Perry's evaluation as to whether deficiencies in the area of safety culture caused or significantly contributed to the issues.

The final significance letter issued to Perry with more information will be available under the accession number ML112371689 and the NRC inspection report detailing the finding is available under ML11187A121. Both can be retrieved through the [ADAMS](#) at the NRC website.

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