



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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Site: www.nrc.gov
Blog: <http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov>

No: II-12-041

June 11, 2012

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NRC SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING FOR JUNE 21 TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE OF BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, June 21, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2011 at the Browns Ferry nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, is in Athens, Ala., about 32 miles west of Huntsville.

The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. CDT with a presentation on the safety performance of the Browns Ferry plant during 2011, as well as a brief discussion of the NRC's oversight and inspection program. After the presentation, there will be a question and answer session. The meeting will be at the Calhoun Community College Aerospace Training Center, 6250 Highway 31 North in Tanner, Ala.

"Last year, our resident inspectors and inspectors from our office in Atlanta spent many hours ensuring that the Browns Ferry plant met NRC safety requirements and protected people living near the plant and the environment," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said.

NRC inspectors also looked at whether there were immediate safety concerns at Browns Ferry and other U.S. plants after the March 2011 events at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan. Those reviews found that the plants remained safe.

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2011 and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/bf_2011q4.pdf.

The NRC found that the Browns Ferry plant overall operated safely during 2011. However, plant performance for Unit 1 continued to require extensive additional NRC oversight in 2012 due to the "red" inspection finding identified in October 2010. It involved a failed low pressure coolant injection valve that could have been needed during certain accident scenarios. The valve was promptly repaired once the issue was identified.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start with “green,” which has very low safety significance, to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” based on the significance of the issues. “Red” indicates a finding of high safety significance. Inspection findings and performance indicators are updated on the NRC’s website (www.nrc.gov) each quarter.

Two of the three parts of the NRC’s red finding supplemental inspection program have been completed. The most comprehensive of the inspections is expected to begin later this year.

Browns Ferry Units 2 and 3 were in the NRC’s Licensee Response column at the end of 2011, meaning all inspection findings and performance indicators were “green.” That assessment means those two units will receive the NRC’s normal or baseline level of detailed inspections.

Current performance information for the three Browns Ferry units is available on the NRC website at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF1/bf1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF2/bf2_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF3/bf3_chart.html.

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