



NRC NEWS

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NRC SENDS AUGMENTED INSPECTION TEAM TO ARKANSAS NUCLEAR ONE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will send an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) to Arkansas Nuclear One to review the circumstances surrounding an industrial accident in which a heavy load fell onto the Unit 1 turbine deck, causing a loss of offsite power to Unit 1 and an automatic shutdown of Unit 2.

Workers were moving a massive generator stator out of the plant's turbine building during maintenance activity when a lifting rig collapsed about 7:45 a.m. on March 31, killing one person and injuring eight others. Entergy Operations Inc., which operates the plant, declared a Notice of Unusual Event, the lowest of four emergency classifications used by the NRC, but terminated it after taking corrective actions to stabilize the plant's power supplies.

"An AIT is used when the NRC wants to promptly dig deeply into the circumstances surrounding an operational event," said NRC Region IV Administrator Arthur T. Howell. "We want to make sure that all the circumstances that contributed to this event are well understood in order to prevent a recurrence."

Unit 1 was in a refueling outage at the time and lost offsite power when electrical equipment was damaged. Unit 2 was operating at full power and automatically shut down when the impact of the crash caused a loss of electrical power to one of four reactor coolant pumps, causing it to shut down. Both plants are in stable condition, and there was no radiological release or danger to the public.

NRC Resident Inspectors responded to the control room to monitor site activities during the event and have been monitoring licensee activities and initial recovery actions. Two additional inspectors were sent to the site to assist on April 1.

The Augmented Inspection Team will put together a detailed chronology of the event, evaluate the adequacy of licensee actions in response to the incident and assess the factors which may have contributed to the event. The team's report will document information gathered and identify areas for further inspection follow-up.

The NRC will hold a public meeting with the licensee upon completion of the inspection to discuss its inspection findings. The meeting will be open to the public and the news media and

team members will be available to answer questions after the results are presented. The AIT will also issue a written report within 30 days of completion of the inspection.

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