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NRC to Increase Oversight of Turkey Point Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is increasing its oversight of Unit 3 at the Turkey Point nuclear power plant as a result of the number of unplanned shutdowns the plant has experienced. The Turkey Point plant is located near Homestead, Fla., about 20 miles south of Miami, and is operated by Florida Power & Light Co.

After its quarterly review of plant performance in April, the NRC updated its assessment of Turkey Point Unit 3. That evaluation consisted of a review of performance indicators and inspection results.

The NRC review found that Turkey Point Unit 3 crossed the green-to-white threshold for the “unplanned scrams per 7,000 critical hours” performance indicator. This was due to three trips in the first quarter this year.

“Overall, the Turkey Point plant continues to operate safely,” said NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree. “However, these shutdowns point to potential performance issues and we want to ensure that the company addresses them appropriately.”

The NRC will conduct a supplemental inspection to provide assurance that the causes of the shutdowns are understood, to identify the extent of condition, and to ensure FPL’s corrective actions are sufficient.

The NRC evaluates inspection findings and performance indicators at commercial nuclear power plants with a color-coded system which classifies them as green, white, yellow or red, in increasing order of safety significance. As the significance increases, the NRC heightens the level of oversight for that plant including additional inspections. If a plant takes appropriate corrective actions and improves safety performance, the agency returns to its normal, but still extensive, inspection schedule.