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NRC Issues Confirmatory Order to Entergy Regarding Palisades Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a Confirmatory Order to Entergy Nuclear Operations Inc. under which the company will perform a series of actions to address failures in handling a leak from the safety injection refueling water tank (SIRWT) into the control room at the Palisades Nuclear Plant.

The plant is located in Covert, Mich., five miles south of South Haven.

The order stems from a settlement reached under the NRC's alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process requested by plant-owner Entergy to address the violations identified in the NRC's [investigation](#). The violations are connected to the discovery of leakage from the plant's control room ceiling on May 18, 2011.

Even though the leak did not result in damage to control room or other safety equipment, the NRC determined that four Palisades employees willfully failed to enter information which identified the tank as the source of the control room leak into the corrective actions program. This delayed Entergy's response to the issue. In addition, Entergy failed to perform an adequate analysis of the tank's ability to fulfill its safety function, and failed to follow requirements associated with a missed tank surveillance test. The tank is designed to provide borated water to cool the reactor in case of an accident.

Entergy has already taken a number of actions to address the causes of the violations, which include repairs to the tank to prevent further leakage and strengthening the safety culture at Palisades. The NRC independently reviewed the company's efforts and noted improvement in these areas.

As a result of the ADR meeting, the company agreed to a number of additional commitments to improve its safety culture. These commitments include: ensuring personnel at Palisades and other Entergy fleet facilities understand lessons learned from this matter; sharing these insights with other nuclear plants; and reviewing applicable procedures. In addition to addressing programmatic and operational issues, the company agreed to modify its interactions with the public on Palisades. Those commitments include: conducting five public meetings by the end of 2018; inviting key stakeholders, such as concerned individuals, non-government organizations, federal, state and local officials to these meetings; focusing meeting discussion on plant safety and operation; and adopting a meeting format which allows members of the public to raise questions and concerns.

The ADR process includes mediation facilitated by a neutral third party, with no decision-making authority, who assists the NRC and a licensee in reaching an agreement when there are differences regarding an enforcement action.

“Using the ADR process allowed us to achieve not only compliance with NRC requirements, but a wide range of corrective actions that go beyond those the agency may get through the traditional enforcement process,” said NRC Region III Administrator Cynthia Pederson. “The company will be reporting to the NRC as they are implementing the corrective actions. After Entergy notifies us in writing that they have fully met the conditions of the order, we will conduct an independent review and assessment of the company’s compliance with the order commitments.”

A copy of the Confirmatory Order will be available on the [NRC’s website](#).