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NRC Preparing for Hurricane Matthew

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has dispatched additional inspectors to three nuclear plants and will activate its regional incident response center in Atlanta later today as the agency prepares for the effects of Hurricane Matthew on NRC-licensed facilities near the expected path of the storm.

Current projections indicate Florida Power & Light Company's St. Lucie plant on the east coast of Florida is likely to receive hurricane-force winds and heavy rain beginning early Friday.

Late Tuesday evening, the staff at the St. Lucie nuclear plant declared an unusual event, lowest of the NRC emergency classifications, based on the hurricane warning issued for the area. The plant staff is also working through severe weather procedures, including ensuring that all loose debris and equipment has been removed or secured and conducting walkdowns of important systems and equipment.

The staff at FPL's Turkey Point plant south of Miami and the NRC inspectors there are also preparing for wind, rain and storm surge with similar activities as are the staff and NRC inspectors at Duke Energy's Brunswick nuclear plant near Southport, N.C.

The Global Nuclear Fuel – Americas plant near Wilmington, N.C., is also following the storm preparation procedures for nuclear fuel facilities.

NRC resident inspectors at the Turkey Point, St. Lucie, and Brunswick plants have verified that all the preparations have been completed, and the plants emergency diesel generators are available to be used if the storm affects off-site power supplies.

The NRC regional office in Atlanta has dispatched region-based inspectors or inspectors from other unaffected plants to ensure a 24-hour NRC presence at the three plants closest to the storm's path.

From the NRC Region II incident response center in Atlanta, NRC staff members will monitor the path and strength of Hurricane Matthew while remaining in contact with plant operators, NRC on-site inspectors, the NRC's headquarters operations center and state emergency officials in Florida and North Carolina.

The NRC inspectors will remain at the nuclear plant sites and the incident response center will remain staffed until the agency is assured that the storm no longer poses a risk to those facilities.