

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC, PG&E OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATION AT DIABLO CANYON

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a predecisional enforcement conference this week with officials of the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. to discuss an apparent violation of NRC requirements at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

The conference will begin at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 18, at the NRC Region IV office in Arlington, Texas. PG&E operates the Diablo Canyon plant near Avila Beach, California. The meeting will be open to the public for observation; NRC officials will be available afterwards for questions.

The violation to be discussed was discovered during an NRC inspection of Diablo Canyon conducted from late September through early November. NRC inspectors determined that PG&E had failed to conduct a required safety evaluation.

The safety evaluation should have been conducted in 1984, when changes were made to the plant's emergency operating procedure as to certain steps that operators should take if primary coolant to the reactor was lost.

The evaluation was required because the revised emergency operating procedure, although technically acceptable, differed slightly from the steps outlined in the plant's Updated Final Safety Analysis Report. That document, reviewed and approved by the NRC, provides the design basis for the safe operation of the plant.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that NRC has made a final determination that a violation did occur or that enforcement action, such as a monetary fine, will be taken. The purpose is to discuss the apparent violation, its cause and safety significance; to provide PG&E an opportunity to challenge or correct portions of the NRC inspection report; and for the licensee to outline its corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violation or any enforcement action will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made later by senior NRC officials.

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