

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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**NRC STAFF ISSUES APPRAISAL OF PERFORMANCE
AT CRYSTAL RIVER NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN FLORIDA**

Overall Performance Declines From Previous Assessment Period

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report for Florida Power Corporation's Crystal River nuclear power plant, located near Crystal River, Florida, which NRC officials say indicates an overall decline in performance at the facility since its previous assessment.

The NRC staff evaluated performance at Crystal River for a period from September 17, 1995 through October 5 of this year and found that performance in the functional areas of Operations and Engineering declined from "good" to "acceptable" while performance in the functional area of Plant Support declined from "superior" to "good." Performance in the functional area of Maintenance was sustained at a "good" level.

It was the second consecutive decline in assessment for Engineering, which has seen its assessment over the last two SALP periods drop twice, from "superior" to "good" to "acceptable".

Stewart D. Ebner, Administrator of the NRC's Region II office in Atlanta, said "common threads" running through the assessment, which contributed to the performance decline, were weak management oversight, ineffective self-assessment, insufficient involvement in quality assurance, and an "insensitivity" to regulatory requirements.

Operations addresses the control and execution of activities directly related to operating the plant. Maintenance involves activities in the areas of testing and maintaining plant structures, systems and components. Engineering involves activities associated with the design of plant modifications and support for operations, maintenance, surveillance (testing) and licensing activities. Plant Support addresses radiological controls, radioactive effluents, chemistry emergency preparedness, security, fire protection and housekeeping controls.

The NRC staff assesses performance in these areas at all commercial nuclear power plants in the United States on a periodic basis as being in one of three categories. Category 1 is considered superior. Category 2 is considered good, and Category 3 is acceptable.

NRC officials will meet with company management at the plant site at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, December 2, to discuss details of the report. The meeting is open to observation by the public and the press, and NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from interested observers.

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