

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Region III Office of Public Affairs
801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

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NRC STAFF TO MEET WITH CONSUMERS ENERGY CO. TO DISCUSS
APPARENT VIOLATIONS AT PALISADES NUCLEAR PLANT

Time and Date Change to 1 p.m. on December 19
(Previously announced as December 18)

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet December 19 with Consumers Energy Company officials for a predecisional enforcement conference on apparent violations associated with the temporary disabling of the control rod system at the Palisades Nuclear Power Station.

The meeting will be at 1 p.m. (CST) in the Third Floor Conference Room, NRC Region III Office, 801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois. The meeting is open to public observation.

The apparent violations involved an October 17 incident in which the entire reactor control rod drive system was taken out of service for maintenance while the plant was in operation.

The drives move the control rods in the reactor to increase or decrease the reactor power level. A separate system is used to quickly shut down the reactor by fully inserting all control rods.

Maintenance was planned on one of 45 control rod drives. Instead of shutting off electric power to just that drive, however, the plant staff blocked the electric power to all 45 control rod drives.

The control rod drives were disabled for about 3 hours while the maintenance was performed. During that time, the reactor could have been shut down if necessary by inserting all the control rods in an automatic or manual reactor trip. However, the control rods could not have been moved individually to adjust reactor power level.

The decision to hold an enforcement conference does not mean the NRC has determined that a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the company to outline its proposed corrective actions.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a fine, will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later date.

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Note: The schedule of NRC meetings open to public observation is available on the NRC's internet web site at <<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>>.