

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs, Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
Arlington, Texas 76011-8064

RIV: 98-17
CONTACT: Breck Henderson
OFFICE: 817/860-8128PAGER: (800)443-7243 (065477)

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WATERFORD PLANT RATED 'GOOD' IN ALL AREAS IN NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT

Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3, a nuclear power plant near Taft, Louisiana, received safety performance ratings of "good" in all rated areas -- plant operations, maintenance, engineering and plant support -- in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) for the facility.

The SALP report was sent April 24 to Energy Operations, Inc., which operates the plant. The report evaluates the plant's performance from December 1, 1996, through March 21 of this year.

NRC and Entergy officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 12, in the Waterford 3 Energy Center. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

NRC systematic assessment reports rate licensees in four functional areas -- plant operation, maintenance, engineering, and plant support -- and assign ratings of Category 1, 2, or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or acceptable. The report on Waterford 3 gives the plant a Category 2 rating in all areas indicating good safety performance. Waterford was given the following scores on the current SALP and previous SALP in December 1996:

Functional areas & ratings

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Previous</u>
Plant Operations	2	2
Maintenance	2	2
Engineering	2	3
Plant Support	2	2

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator Ellis W. Merschoff said, "During this evaluation period, overall performance at Waterford 3 improved."

"In the plant operations area, some improvements were noted over the previous assessment," Mr. Merschoff said. Opportunities for additional improvement in operations exist in the areas of procedures and human performance. "

A number of programmatic enhancements were implemented to improve maintenance planning, scheduling and efficiency; however, implementation of the welding program had some deficiencies, Mr. Merschoff noted.

Radiological protection and emergency preparedness programs showed good performance in the plant support area, while plant security was only "acceptable" and problems evident in the last SALP period continued to exist.

In engineering the ability to identify emerging issues that affected equipment operability was substantially improved. Problems maintaining the integrity of the design and licensing bases continued to exist despite increased sensitivity in this area.

"Overall, your self-assessment activities improved the identification of conditions adverse to quality at Waterford 3 . . . and organizational self-assessments contributed to the overall improved performance," Mr. Merschoff said.

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EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS: A copy of the assessment report is available from this office.