



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS -- REGION I

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NRC ISSUES FINDING OF LOW TO MODERATE SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE TO SUSQUEHANNA NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that a violation of NRC regulations at Susquehanna Steam Electric Station in Berwick, Pa., should be characterized as “white,” meaning that it is an issue of low to moderate importance to safety but one which may require additional NRC inspections. The plant is operated by PPL Susquehanna, LLC.

The violation concerned several occasions when on-shift staffing was below the minimum on-shift staffing requirements as defined in the plant’s emergency plan. At the reduced on-shift staffing levels certain emergency preparedness functions for an emergency at the site, including monitoring the unaffected unit for safety and operations support center coordination duties, would not be met.

Under the significance determination process, NRC officials classify certain conditions at nuclear power plants as being one of four colors which delineate increasing levels of severity, beginning with green and progressing in severity to white, yellow or red.

A preliminary “white” finding was described in an inspection report dated August 10 of this year. The letter transmitting the report provided the company with an opportunity to either request a regulatory conference to discuss this issue or to respond in writing. The company declined the conference and did not contest the characterization of the risk significance of this finding.

In a letter to the company, Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller said, while the company revised the procedure in question, “our ongoing inspections indicate that some emergency plan staffing problems have recurred on a few occasions since our May/June inspection.”

The company is required to respond in writing, detailing its immediate and long-term corrective actions.

Because this violation falls into the regulatory response band of the NRC’s oversight process, Susquehanna may be subject to increased NRC oversight such as additional meetings or inspections. The agency will determine the most appropriate response and notify the company once that determination has been made.

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