



NRC NEWS

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

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NRC ISSUES FINDING OF SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTANCE TO SAFETY TO CALVERT CLIFFS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has determined that a violation of NRC regulations at Calvert Cliffs Unit 1 nuclear power plant should be characterized as “yellow,” meaning it is an issue of substantial importance to safety that will result in additional NRC inspection. The plant, located in Lusby, Md., is operated by Constellation Nuclear.

An NRC inspection was conducted in June and July of this year to look into the failure of an auxiliary feedwater pump during a test on May 16. The auxiliary feedwater system is a backup system that provides water to the plant’s steam generators in the event that the main feedwater system is lost. The inspectors found that workers failed to adhere to maintenance instructions during maintenance on the pump and applied too much sealant to the bearing housing, contaminating the bearing oil, resulting in the bearing failure.

Under the NRC's new reactor oversight process, inspection findings are evaluated under a significance determination process and assigned a color that indicates safety significance. Findings with very low safety significance are labeled "green." "White" findings have low to moderate importance to safety and may require additional NRC inspection. "Yellow" findings have substantial safety significance, and "red" findings high safety significance.

A preliminary “yellow” finding was described in an inspection report dated August 24 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.

The company has taken corrective action to correct the problem and the pump was tested satisfactorily. The company is required to respond in writing within 30 days, detailing its immediate and long-term corrective actions. A supplemental NRC inspection will be scheduled to follow-up on Constellation’s corrective actions.

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