



NRC NEWS

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NRC EXPANDS SPECIAL INSPECTION OF WORKER RADIATION EXPOSURES AT DAVIS-BESSE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has expanded its inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the radiation exposures received by several workers at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station while working on the steam generators in February of this year. The plant, operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company is located at Oak Harbor, Ohio.

The NRC initiated a special inspection in April, which focused on how microscopic radioactive particles were carried off the Davis-Besse site on the clothing of several workers who had performed maintenance on the plant's steam generators. The workers were employed by a contractor conducting activities at the Davis-Besse plant. Isolated, low-levels of radioactive contamination was subsequently found at various locations in Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. The steam generator work was not related to the reactor vessel head damage discovered at the plant in early March.

During a review of the incident, the NRC staff raised questions with FirstEnergy about the level of radiation exposure of the workers involved with the steam generator work. FirstEnergy has concluded that worker exposures were within NRC limits. The NRC arranged for an independent radiation dose assessment of one of the workers by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

However, the company's and the NRC's estimates differ, and the NRC has decided to expand its original inspection to examine the facts and circumstances surrounding the event and generate the final analysis on the radiation dose received by the workers.

The expanded NRC special inspection will focus on work planning, the precautions taken during the steam generator work, the measurements of radioactive contamination received by the workers at the time, and the radiation dose received as a result of any inhalation or ingestion of radioactive material by the workers.

The inspection team is led by a manager from the NRC's Region III Office in Lisle, Illinois, and includes four Region III radiological protection specialists and is supplemented by contractor expertise.

A report detailing the findings of how the discreet radioactive particles had been carried off the Davis-Besse site and the radiation dose received by the workers will be publicly available on the NRC web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/vessel-head-degradation.html>.

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