



# ***NRC NEWS***

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## **NRC TO MEET WITH ENERGY NORTHWEST TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE OF COLUMBIA GENERATING STATION**

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Energy Northwest, on Friday, April 11, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at Columbia Generating Station. The facility is located near Richland, Wa., and is operated by Energy Northwest.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Richland Public Library Gallery, 955 Northgate Drive, Richland, Wa.

Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of the plant, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe plant operation.

The performance period to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2002. In addition, NRC staff will provide an overview of how the agency's Reactor Oversight Process works.

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV Office to representatives of Energy Northwest, addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at:

[http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/wnp\\_2002q4.pdf](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/wnp_2002q4.pdf)

"Overall, Columbia Generating Station operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety and fully met all cornerstone objectives," the letter says. "While plant performance for the most recent quarter is within the Regulatory Response Column of the Action Matrix, there was an additional safety significant inspection finding that was present during the first two quarters of the assessment cycle," the letter says. "During the first two quarters, plant performance was within the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the Action Matrix based on a finding of substantial safety significance (Yellow) in the Emergency Preparedness Cornerstone that was identified in the third quarter of 2001."

The finding involved the failure to maintain adequate emergency plans and procedures for the plant. The NRC staff performed a supplemental inspection and verified the adequacy of corrective

actions taken by Energy Northwest. As a result, the plant exited the Degraded Cornerstone Column and entered the Regulatory Response Column in July 2002.

However, despite these improvements, human performance issues continue to be a concern and the NRC staff will review licensee efforts in this area as part of the baseline inspection program, including a problem identification and resolution inspection in June.

In addition, the letter notes: “As you are aware, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the NRC has issued several Orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness. We have conducted inspections to review your implementation of these requirements and have monitored your actions in response to changing threat conditions. For calendar year 2003, we plan to continue these inspections and conduct portions of the security baseline inspection program, as well as perform additional inspections to evaluate your compliance with new requirements that may be ordered.”

Current performance information for Columbia Generating Station is available on the NRC web site at: [http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/WASH2/wash2\\_chart.html](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/WASH2/wash2_chart.html)

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