



NRC NEWS

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NRC STAFF TO MEET WITH FIRSTENERGY TO DISCUSS DAVIS-BESSE RESTART

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet December 18 with representatives of FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company in Oak Harbor, Ohio, to discuss the possible startup of the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant. The plant, located near Oak Harbor, has been shut down since February of last year.

A second meeting will be held that day to present the preliminary findings of the NRC's inspection reviewing management and human performance at Davis-Besse, including the safety culture of the plant staff.

The safety culture inspection meeting will be at 1:30 p.m. in the Davis-Besse Administration Building, 5503 North State Route 2, Oak Harbor.

The restart meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in the Camp Perry Clubhouse, 1000 Lawrence Road, Bldg. 600, on Highway 2 west of Port Clinton. A picture identification is required to enter Camp Perry; the guards will provide visitors with directions to the meeting site.

The public is invited to observe the business portion of each meeting and will have an opportunity to make comments and ask questions of the NRC staff before the meetings are adjourned.

The restart meeting schedule is contingent on the Davis-Besse plant beginning preparations for startup which involve gradually building up heat and pressure in the reactor cooling system using the reactor cooling pumps. If these activities are delayed, the restart meeting and the safety culture meeting may be rescheduled.

The NRC Restart Readiness Assessment Team Inspection, which began December 8, will observe the plant operating staff as it makes the transition from Mode 5 (known as cold shutdown) to Mode 4 and Mode 3, which reflects increasing temperatures in the reactor cooling system. The utility may not start up the reactor (Mode 2) without NRC approval.

At the 6 p.m. restart meeting, FirstEnergy will present the basis for its request to the NRC for authorization to restart the Davis-Besse plant. It will also discuss its assessment of the performance of the operating staff during the initial heatup process.

There will be no decision on possible restart during the meeting. In evaluating FirstEnergy's request for restart, the NRC's Davis-Besse Oversight Panel will review the information presented by the company, along with the results of NRC inspections over the past 21 months.

The panel will submit its recommendation to James Caldwell, Regional Administrator for NRC Region III. Mr. Caldwell will make a decision on the possible restart after conferring with other senior NRC officials. The decision will be based on the agency's assessment of the ability of FirstEnergy to start up and operate the plant safely.

Extensive information on the NRC's regulatory activities at Davis-Besse are available on the agency's web site: <http://www.nrc.gov> - select "Davis-Besse" from the key topics menu.

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