



# NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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## **NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Entergy Nuclear on Thursday, March 17, to discuss the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. The period of performance to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2004.

Entergy operates the plant, which is located in Vernon, Vt.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. at the Governor Hunt House, 320 Governor Hunt Road in Vernon. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

"Every year the NRC rates the performance of Vermont Yankee and the nation's other commercial nuclear power plants," NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our assessment with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our oversight of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials 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/vy\\_2004q4.pdf](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/vy_2004q4.pdf).

Overall, Vermont Yankee operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. Because Vermont Yankee has received an inspection finding classified as "white," or of low to moderate safety significance, the plant will receive additional oversight until the problem involved has been satisfactorily addressed. The finding stems from a determination that Entergy could not ensure there was proper distribution and maintenance of tone alert radios that would be used to alert individuals in portions of the plant's 10-mile-radius Emergency

Planning Zone who would not hear sirens due to the terrain.

In addition, the NRC is still reviewing an apparent violation related to recordkeeping, procedural adherence and physical inventory work that may have contributed to the temporary loss of two spent fuel rod pieces at Vermont Yankee. The NRC may conduct a follow-up inspection related to the issue upon final disposition of the apparent violation.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency response, radioactive materials processing and transportation, and the effectiveness of the plant's maintenance activities.

Current performance information for Vermont Yankee is available on the NRC web site at: [http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VY/vy\\_chart.html](http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VY/vy_chart.html) .

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