



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR D.C. COOK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of American Electric Power Company on Thursday, April 21, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance last year at the D.C. Cook Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located near Bridgman, Mich.

The meeting, which will be open to public observation, is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Lake Charter Township Hall, 3220 Shawnee Road, Bridgman.

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

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the D.C. Cook plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

The NRC's assessment concluded that, overall, the D.C. Cook plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

A letter sent from the NRC Region III 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/cook_2004q4.pdf.

During 2004, D.C. Cook had one "white" inspection finding, which affected Units 1 and 2, and two "white" performance indicators for Unit 2. The "white" inspection finding was issued for the failure to properly prepare a package of radioactive material for shipment. The "white" performance indicators had to do with the number of times the plant had to shut down unexpectedly and with the number of times the plant lost its capability for normal heat removal.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, IL, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are reactor vessel head penetration nozzles, radiological access control, fire protection, and transportation and processing of radioactive waste.

Current performance information for D.C. Cook is available on the NRC's web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/COOK1/cook1_chart.html and
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/COOK2/cook2_chart.html.

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