



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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September 21, 2005
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NRC DISPATCHES INSPECTORS IN PREPARATION FOR HURRICANE RITA

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff are closely monitoring storm preparations at two nuclear plants in Texas and Louisiana in the projected path of Hurricane Rita.

As part of its preparations, three inspectors from the NRC's Region IV office in Arlington, Texas have been sent to South Texas Project near Bay City, Texas. Two more NRC inspectors have been dispatched to the Waterford nuclear plant about 20 miles west of New Orleans, La. The five will provide around the clock coverage at each of the plants, if needed.

"In accordance with NRC requirements, Waterford and South Texas Project are making the necessary preparations for Hurricane Rita," said Bruce S. Mallett, administrator of NRC's Region IV office. "As we did with Hurricane Katrina, we are pre-positioning our people to monitor events and respond, if needed."

NRC staff have been in close contact with both plants to ensure their safe and secure operation. Both plants are robust structures with watertight doors designed to withstand hurricane force winds and significant floods.

The NRC requires that each nuclear plant shut down under weather conditions specific to each site. South Texas Project is required to shut down if winds in excess of 73 m.p.h. are projected at the site. Waterford has to shut down if winds in excess of 74 m.p.h. are projected at the site.

South Texas Project plans to have both reactors shut down seven hours before Rita makes landfall, now expected to occur early Saturday morning. Entergy Nuclear, which shut down the Waterford plant as a precaution prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, is closely monitoring Hurricane Rita's path.

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