



NRC NEWS

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Office of Public Affairs

Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa@nrc.gov

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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NRC FORMS TASK FORCE TO LOOK FOR LESSONS LEARNED FROM 2005 HURRICANE SEASON INCIDENT RESPONSE

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has created a task force to continue assessing the preparations for and response to the 2005 hurricane season by the NRC, affected states and licensees. The task force will focus especially on agency actions related to hurricanes Katrina and Rita and their effects on nuclear power plants in Louisiana and Florida. The task force will review the agency's actions to monitor the storms, interact with state officials and work with nuclear facility operators licensed by the NRC. Based on the review, the task force will make recommendations for improvements.

The task force will also review actions related to radioactive material licensees in areas that could have been, or were, affected by the severe weather.

“Our response to this year’s hurricane season was very good. We are pleased with how our staff handled the storms and interacted with affected states and licensees,” said Melvyn Leach, the task force team leader and an official in the NRC’s Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response. “We are always looking for ways to do better. We want to apply lessons learned here to incidents other than those involving hurricanes.”

As part of its mission, the task force will pay particular attention to the adequacy of primary and back-up communication systems linking the NRC, other government organizations and the licensees. The task force will also compare lessons learned from the 2005 hurricanes to observations related to 1992’s Hurricane Andrew to see if issues have recurred. Officials from numerous states will be asked to provide input to the task force, which is comprised of 10 staff members from headquarters and region offices.

The task force first met in early November and is expected to deliver a report with recommendations for improvements to the Executive Director for Operations in February 2006. Depending on the conclusions of the task force and direction from the Commission, regulatory changes or other actions could be proposed. The final report will be made public in the future.

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