



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive – Suite 400
Arlington, Texas 76011-4005

No. 07-IV-044
Contact: Victor Dricks
Phone: (817) 860-8128

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E-Mail: opa4@nrc.gov

NRC FINALIZES “WHITE” FINDING FOR FORT CALHOUN NUCLEAR PLANT

The Fort Calhoun nuclear plant will receive additional oversight from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission based on a violation that adversely affected the reliability of one of the plant's emergency diesel generators. The plant, located near Omaha, Neb., is operated by the Omaha Public Power District.

The NRC uses a color-coded system to categorize inspection findings. They range from “green,” for an issue of very low safety significance, to “red,” for a highly significant issue. In this case, the violation has been determined to be “white,” indicating it is of low to moderate safety significance.

The finding is based on an NRC inspection completed on Sept. 17 that identified multiple performance deficiencies. The violations involve improper electrical maintenance of an emergency diesel generator which resulted in failures on Feb. 14 and Feb. 16. The diesel generators supply power to plant safety systems during emergencies in the event of a loss of off-site power. The licensee has taken corrective action to prevent recurrence, but the failures are significant.

“Our inspection determined there were multiple performance deficiencies involved in this incident,” said Region IV Administrator Elmo E. Collins. “Workers applied an unapproved lubricant to a sliding mechanism on the diesel generator that interfered with its operation, causing the Feb. 14 failure. Maintenance on the diesel generator following the Feb. 14 failure contributed to a subsequent failure on Feb. 16. ”

At the request of Omaha Public Power District officials, a regulatory conference was held on Nov. 8 in the NRC's Region IV office in Arlington, Texas, during which additional information was provided to NRC staff used in making the final determination. The licensee has 30 days to appeal that finding.

NRC officials will meet with representatives of the Omaha Public Power District on Dec. 20 to discuss a comprehensive inspection to be conducted at the site next year.

The meeting, which will be open to public observation, will begin at 12:30 p.m. in the NRC's Region IV office. The public will have an opportunity to observe and ask questions of NRC staff before the meeting is adjourned. Members of the public can listen to the meeting via a special telephone line by calling 1-800-952-9677 and asking to be transferred to the meeting.

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