



NRC NEWS

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NRC SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND 2007 REGULATORY PERFORMANCE AT BRUNSWICK NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has scheduled a public meeting with officials of Progress Energy on Thursday, May 1, to discuss corrective actions and 2007 regulatory performance at the Brunswick nuclear power plant, located near Southport on the southern coast of North Carolina.

The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. (EDT) in the Brunswick Media Center Auditorium, located near the plant at 8520 River Road, S. E., Southport, N.C., 28461.

The NRC will discuss the plant's 2007 regulatory safety performance with company officials and review corrective actions taken regarding a "white" Performance Indicator for emergency AC power systems and cooling water systems, along with a "white" inspection finding related to failure of an emergency diesel generator in 2006.

The NRC evaluates regulatory performance at commercial nuclear power plants with a color-coded system which classifies findings as either green, white, yellow or red, in increasing order of safety significance. The NRC determined that both issues at Brunswick were "white," meaning they were of low to moderate safety significance.

NRC officials said that, overall, the two reactors at Brunswick operated safely during the agency's assessment period which ran from January 1 through December 31, 2007.

However, Unit 1 was in the "degraded cornerstone" column of the NRC's action matrix for the first three quarters of 2007 due to a white inspection finding that the Unit's No. 1 emergency diesel generator was out of service for a period of time in excess of what is allowed. In addition, a Mitigating Systems Performance Index (MSPI) performance indicator related to the Unit 1 Emergency AC Power System crossed the Green to White threshold in the second quarter of 2006 and remained White. Then, the MSPI performance indicator for Cooling Water Systems crossed from Green to White in the third quarter of 2007 due to issues with the service water and residual heat removal service water systems. Some of these issues included identification of foreign material within these safety-related systems, which were the subject of an NRC Special Inspection Team inspection completed on Feb. 1, 2008.

Unit 2 was in the Regulatory Response column of the NRC Action Matrix for the first three quarters of 2007. The Emergency AC Power System MSPI went from green to white in the second quarter of 2006 and remained white.

Following modifications, white Performance Indicators at both units transitioned to green in the fourth quarter of 2007.

NRC officials said risk-informed plant modifications involving installation of portable diesel generators reflects a strong safety focus on the part of Progress Energy but that additional management attention to underlying performance issues is warranted.

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