



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC MONITORING APPROACH OF HURRICANE IKE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has activated its Incident Response Center in Arlington, Texas, and is monitoring the approach of Hurricane Ike, expected to make landfall on the Texas coast tomorrow morning.

The South Texas Project nuclear plant in Bay City, Texas, has notified the NRC that it intends to shut down if hurricane winds in excess of 73 mph are forecast on site. The licensee would also declare an Unusual Event – the lowest of the agency’s four emergency classifications – if they begin shutting down.

The plant is required to be shut down two hours prior to the arrival of hurricane force winds, and declare an Alert in the event of any structural damage to safety-related buildings on site. However, current forecasts indicate that winds may not reach hurricane force at the plant site.

On Wednesday, the agency dispatched four inspectors to the South Texas Project, which has two pressurized water reactors, and is located 12 miles from Bay City, Texas. They are on site, monitoring the licensee’s preparations for the storm.

“We are following Ike very closely and have taken steps to ensure that public health and safety will be protected in the event the storm affects the South Texas Project,” Region IV Administrator Elmo E. Collins said. “We have activated our Incident Response Center in Arlington, and are tracking the storm around the clock.”

Agency officials at the Rockville, Md., headquarters are also monitoring the course of Hurricane Ike.

South Texas Project, like all nuclear plants, has emergency diesel generators available in the event of a loss of off-site power and has been designed to withstand hurricane force winds, as well as other natural disasters like tornadoes, earthquakes and storm surges.

Comanche Peak, located in Glen Rose, Texas, is not expected to be affected by the storm.

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