



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region II
61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303
Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. II-09-037

July 14, 2009

CONTACT: Roger Hannah (404) 562-4417
Joey Ledford (404) 562-4416

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC CITES SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING CO. FOR FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT EMERGENCY PLAN VIOLATION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that Southern Nuclear Operating Co. violated NRC regulations regarding tone alert radios distributed to residents near the two-unit Farley nuclear plant, operated by the company southeast of Dothan in southern Ala. The tone alert radios are part of a system to alert and provide information to people near the plant in the event of a radiological emergency.

In early 2008, Farley plant employees identified that more than 100 tone alert radios had not been distributed to addresses within the plant's 10-mile emergency planning zone. A subsequent review identified additional addresses that had also not received the radios. During the summer of 2008, Southern Nuclear distributed radios to those addresses and also revised the plant's procedures for distributing and maintaining those radios.

"The NRC takes any reduction in the effectiveness of a plant's emergency plans very seriously," said Region II Administrator Luis Reyes. "While we're satisfied the company evaluated the deficiencies and took appropriate actions to improve their program, this violation underscores the importance of proper notification in the event of a radiological emergency."

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," matching the safety significance of the issues involved.

This issue was determined to be a "white" finding of low to moderate safety significance. Based on the violation of NRC regulatory requirements, the NRC issued a Notice of Violation to Southern Nuclear for its failure to "establish an effective means of providing early notification and instruction" to people living near the plant. NRC white findings normally result in additional NRC inspections and oversight.

The letter notifying Southern Nuclear Operating Co. of the white finding will be available from the NRC's Region II Office of Public Affairs or at www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html.

###

News releases are available through a free *listserv* subscription at the following Web address: <http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html>. The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link. E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.