



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. I-12-011

March 22, 2012

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NRC TO HOLD OPEN HOUSE ON MARCH 29 IN PLYMOUTH, MASS., TO DISCUSS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF PILGRIM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an open house on Thursday, March 29, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Pilgrim nuclear power plant.

The open house will take place from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Plymouth Town Hall, at 11 Lincoln St. in Plymouth, Mass. Members of the public will have an opportunity to learn first-hand from NRC staff members about the plant's safety performance during 2011 and about the agency's oversight of the facility. The meeting format will allow citizens to discuss plant-related topics on a one-on-one basis with NRC inspectors assigned to the plant and their NRC Region I supervisor.

Pilgrim, which is the site of a single boiling-water reactor, is located in Plymouth. It is owned and operated by Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc.

Overall, Pilgrim operated safely during 2011. However, a "White" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding was finalized for the plant on Nov. 21, 2011. The finding involved the failure of Pilgrim control room operators to follow appropriate standards and procedures on reactivity control during a start-up of the reactor on May 10, 2011. This failure contributed to an unrecognized subcriticality, or the reactor going below power-production levels, followed by an unrecognized return to criticality and a subsequent automatic reactor scram, or shutdown.

As a result of the finding, the plant will receive additional NRC oversight in 2012. Specifically, the agency will perform a supplemental inspection at Pilgrim to evaluate the company's root-cause analysis of what occurred during the event and its corrective actions.

Pilgrim will also receive the NRC's normal suite of inspections this year. In 2011, the NRC devoted approximately 7,830 hours of inspection to the plant.

"We expect Entergy to get to the bottom of the issues that contributed to the 'White' inspection finding finalized for Pilgrim late last year. Ensuring that occurs will be a focus for the NRC in 2012," NRC Region I Administrator Bill Dean said. "Looking back on 2011, our inspectors spent time checking on whether there were any immediate safety concerns at U.S. nuclear power plants following the March events at the Fukushima Daiichi facility in Japan. Those reviews indicated the plants remained safe for continued operation."

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with "Green" and then increase to "White," "Yellow" or "Red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year: during the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC's [website](#) each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The meetings are in keeping with the agency's commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The [annual assessment](#) for the Pilgrim plant is available on the NRC website. The notice for the open house is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System ([ADAMS](#)) under accession number ML12074A083. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@NRC.GOV.

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency's Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at Pilgrim to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, fire protection, emergency preparedness and the plant's implementation of a voluntary industry initiative to address potential degradation of underground piping.

Current [performance information](#) for Pilgrim is available on the NRC website.

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