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NRC Begins Special Inspection at Columbia Generating Station

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection at the Columbia Generating Station to review a problem with a piece of equipment that provides cool air to a room housing important emergency electrical equipment. Energy Northwest operates the plant located near Richland, Wash.

During a recent inspection, the licensee discovered a large heat exchanger that provides cool air for a room housing electrical circuit breakers and safety-related batteries had not been properly maintained, reducing its capability. In the event of an emergency, a redundant system could have provided cooling and workers have taken corrective action to address maintenance issues.

“The purpose of this special inspection is to better understand the sequence of events that contributed to the maintenance problem and review the licensee’s corrective actions to ensure this cooling system will perform as intended,” said Region IV Administrator Arthur T. Howell.

NRC inspectors will spend about a week onsite evaluating the licensee’s root cause analysis and corrective actions. An inspection report documenting the team’s findings will be publicly available within 45 days of the end of the inspection.