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NRC Issues Mid-Cycle Assessments for Nation's Nuclear Plants

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued mid-cycle assessment letters to the nation's 99 operating commercial nuclear power plants regarding their performance through the first half of 2015. The mid-cycle assessment period concluded on June 30, with 96 plants in the two highest performance categories.

“NRC senior management and staff perform a systematic review of all current performance indicators, recent inspection findings and other pertinent information for each domestic power reactor facility,” said Scott Morris, Director of the Division of Inspection and Regional Support in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. “One key outcome from this semi-annual process is to ensure that all of our stakeholders clearly understand the basis for our assessments of plant performance and the actions we are taking to address any identified performance deficiencies.”

Of the 96 highest-performing reactors, 75 fully met all safety and security performance objectives and were inspected by the NRC using the normal “baseline” inspection program. The other 21 reactors were assessed as needing to resolve one or two items of low safety significance. For this performance level, regulatory oversight includes additional inspection and follow-up of corrective actions. Plants in this level are: Clinton (Illinois); Comanche Peak 1 and 2 (Texas); Davis-Besse (Ohio); Diablo Canyon 1 and 2 (California); Dresden 2 and 3 (Illinois); Duane Arnold (Iowa); Fitzpatrick (N.Y.); Millstone 3 (Connecticut); Monticello (Minnesota); Oyster Creek (New Jersey); Palisades (Michigan); River Bend (Louisiana); St. Lucie 1 (Florida); Salem 1 (New Jersey); Susquehanna 1 and 2 (Pennsylvania); and Vogtle 1 and 2 (Georgia). (Davis-Besse and St. Lucie 1 have resolved their issues since the reporting period ended and have transitioned to the highest performing level.)

There were no reactors in the third performance category with a degraded level of performance. For this category, regulatory oversight includes more NRC inspections, senior management attention and oversight focused on the cause(s) of the degraded performance.

Three reactors, Arkansas Nuclear One 1 and 2 (Arkansas), and Pilgrim (Massachusetts), were in the fourth performance category as of the end of the mid-cycle assessment period and require the highest level of regulatory oversight. Arkansas Nuclear One 1 and 2 were in this category because of two safety findings of substantial significance. Pilgrim was placed in this category because of long-standing performance issues of low-to-moderate safety significance.

The NRC routinely updates information on each plant's current performance and posts the latest information as it becomes available to the [action matrix summary](#). The mid-cycle assessment letters sent to each operating reactor are also available through the NRC's webpage on the [Reactor Oversight Process](#) by clicking on the reactor name and then 2Q/2015 under Assessment Reports/Inspection Plans.

Annual construction oversight assessments for new reactors at the [Vogtle and Summer sites](#) and at [Watts Bar 2](#) are also on the NRC website.

Every six months each plant receives either a mid-cycle or annual assessment letter along with an NRC inspection plan.