



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC CONTINUES TO MONITOR NUCLEAR PLANTS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE KATRINA

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is working closely with operators at three nuclear plants to ensure continued safe and secure operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

As a precautionary measure, the Waterford 3 nuclear plant near Taft, La., shut down when a hurricane warning was issued for St. Charles Parish on Saturday. It remains in an Unusual Event, the lowest of four emergency action levels. Electrical power for key safety systems on site is being supplied by the plant's standby diesel generators, following a loss of off-site power caused by instability in the regional electrical grid.

NRC staff have independently verified that key plant systems and structures, are undamaged and able to support current plant operations. At the direction of the NRC, the nation's nuclear plants, which are among the most robust structures in the critical infrastructure, have increased security preparedness and capabilities available during emergencies.

A member of the NRC staff plans to accompany officials from the State of Louisiana and the Federal Emergency Management Agency during a survey of the site within the next 48 hours. NRC approval is needed before the plant can be restarted. This survey will include off-site evacuation routes and emergency sirens.

The Grand Gulf nuclear plant near Port Gibson, Miss., and River Bend Nuclear Station near Baton Rouge, La., were both operating at reduced power this morning. The plants operated through the storm, but voluntarily reduced power generation to assist in restoring stability to the electrical grid when a drop in energy consumption caused grid voltage to fluctuate.

Some emergency sirens were unavailable at Grand Gulf and River Bend, but Entergy Nuclear has informed the NRC they can make offsite notifications in the event of an emergency, should the need arise. The NRC will work with FEMA to independently verify siren operability.

NRC staff continue to monitor the situation from its incident response center at its Region IV office in Arlington, Texas.

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