



NRC NEWS

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NRC TASK FORCE TO ASSESS LESSONS LEARNED FROM DAVIS-BESSE REACTOR VESSEL HEAD DEGRADATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Executive Director for Operations has assigned an independent task force to assess lessons-learned related to the degradation of the reactor vessel head at the Davis-Besse nuclear power plant in Ohio.

The Task Force will conduct an independent evaluation of the NRC staff's regulatory processes related to assuring reactor vessel head integrity in order to identify and recommend areas of improvement applicable to the NRC and/or the industry. The scope of the task force effort will include the following five areas: reactor oversight process issues, regulatory process issues, research activities, applicable practices used in the international community, and the NRC's generic issue process.

The task force will be headed by Arthur T. Howell, III, Director of the Division of Reactor Safety, in NRC's Region IV Office in Arlington, Texas, and will include specialists from Region IV as well as the NRC's Region II Office in Atlanta, Georgia, the Office of Nuclear Material Safety & Safeguards, the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, and the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. Representatives from the state of Ohio will also have an active role in the task force review activities.

The task force will address the following areas:

- a. Reactor Oversight Process Issues - evaluate the underlying causes of the Davis-Besse reactor vessel head degradation, and assess whether enhancements to the NRC's reactor oversight process are warranted.
- b. Regulatory Process Issues - evaluate regulations, the licensing review process, and other NRC regulatory processes such as generic communications to determine whether enhancements are warranted.
- c. Research Activities - determine whether there are any issues associated with the NRC process of using reactor operating experience and the results of various research programs, including research performed by NRC, requiring improvement.

- d. International Practices - identify and evaluate foreign regulatory practices related to reactor vessel head degradation to possibly enhance NRC programs and practices.
- e. Generic Issue Process - evaluate the NRC process for identifying and responding to emerging technical issues, including the implementation of short-term and long-term follow-on efforts by the licensee and NRC.

The task force is expected to complete the review by early September. It will then prepare a written report containing conclusions, findings and recommendations that will be made public.

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