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COVERT, Mich. - If a preliminary report by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is made final, the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant, just north of Berrien County, will be one of the worst performing nuclear power plants in the country.

In 2011, Palisades shut down five times unexpectedly, caused three NRC violations, and required two special federal inspections within a month. “We saw a significant decline in the performance of this plant,” said Viktoria Mitlyng, an NRC spokesperson.

In 2010, Palisades was classified with most other nuclear power plants in the United States. Two weeks ago the plant was moved to a more severe classification by the NRC.

At the request of the NRC, Palisades management put together a ‘Performance Recovery Plan’ for two of the violations in 2011. By the plant’s own admission, there are some major changes that need to be made to ensure this plant is operating correctly.

http://www.abc57.com/home/top-stories/Preliminary-report-shows-Palisades-among-worst-power-plants-in-US-137632038.html

Palisades officials recognize the series of violations that occurred in 2011. “It’s a fact we cannot deny, we did not deny and we do not deny,” said Mark Savage, a spokesperson for Palisades.

The most severe violation is one of the two being looked at by NRC officials. A repair was being made to an electrical circuit by an employee, proper procedure wasn’t being used and the employee was nearly killed. “If the employee wasn’t wearing protective clothing, he would’ve been electrocuted,” said Mitlyng.

Mitlyng said before the repair was made several managers could have stopped the problem from happening. “You had a whole chain of command that had a lack of emphasis on safety,” she said.

Last week the plant presented a plan to the NRC outlining a plant to fix repeated missteps. “We have a plan in place that insures we’re getting ourselves back on track and everyone is on board,” said Savage.

In the ‘Performance Recovery Plan’ the plant outlined equipment reliability, safety priorities and effectiveness of leadership.

The plan says ‘Leaders are not sufficiently engaged and intrusive to identify and correct behavior and performance gaps at all levels of the organization,’” the document read.

Savage says despite the failures the public is safe even if the NRC classifies Palisades among the worst nuclear plants in the country. “The NRC will make the decision whether (the classification) happens or not. Our behavior has allowed us to get to that point. Whether that happens or not it’s up for the NRC to decide.”