

Jonathon Monken
Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 31, 2012

IEMA Environmental Personnel Collect Samples Near Byron Nuclear Power Plant

Agency Continues to Monitor Plant Conditions through Remote Monitoring System

SPRINGFIELD – Environmental monitoring personnel from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) are collecting samples around the Byron Nuclear Power Plant today to confirm that a steam release during the Unusual Event on Jan. 30 poses no hazard to the public. While IEMA officials do not expect to find hazardous levels of radioactive tritium, the sampling will allow the agency to verify if tritium is present in the environment and, if present, at what levels.

“While we don’t expect to find harmful levels of tritium from the steam release at Byron, I believe it’s prudent to collect these samples and verify what levels are present,” said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. “We have no reason to believe that harmful levels were released, but we have a duty to the public to ensure what, if any, tritium from the steam release is in the environment around the plant.”

IEMA personnel are collecting water and vegetation samples. Some of the samples will be in the same locations as routine sampling conducted by IEMA within the past month. The samples will be taken to the agency’s laboratory in Springfield for analysis. Results should be available within a few days.

Monken said reactor and environmental analysts at IEMA have been closely monitoring data on conditions at the plant since the Byron Unit 2 reactor tripped Monday morning due to a loss of off-site power. The data is received through the agency’s state-of-the-art remote monitoring system, which continuously relays information about conditions within the reactor as well as analyzes releases through the plant’s stacks and from detectors located in a two-mile radius around the plant.

The agency’s Resident Inspector for the Byron plant has been providing IEMA analysts with additional information about plant conditions and utility actions and is monitoring the utility’s recovery activities.