Kansai Electric expects online reactors to meet new requirements

The Associated Press

TSURUGA, Japan, April 16 (Kyodo) — Kansai Electric Power Co. plans to report that the only two nuclear reactors now in operation in Japan can meet new safety requirements coming into force in July, sources close to the matter said Tuesday.

If the Nuclear Regulation Authority acknowledges that the No. 3 and 4 reactors at the Oi plant in Fukui Prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast are safe enough, they will remain online without being asked to suspend their operations when regulations are revamped.

But the two reactors will be allowed to continue operating until September, when they will be required to undergo routine checkups.

Kansai Electric plans to submit the report to the NRA possibly later this week, the sources said.

The NRA has drafted new safety requirements for nuclear reactors following the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster, urging utilities to take specific measures to protect their atomic plants from tsunami and to prevent or minimize the consequences of severe accidents.

The draft also urges utilities to ready an emergency response center that will not be affected by any earthquake or tsunami. Kansai Electric plans to use a quakeproof meeting room next to a reactor control room as a substitute until a seismic-isolated building is completed in fiscal 2015.

The utility also believes it has taken enough anti-tsunami measures such as watertight doors.

The two reactors in question are located on ground higher than tsunami waves that are assumed to hit the area. Kansai Electric also plans to complete a sea wall in March 2014.

Utilities will also be asked to equip reactors with filtered venting systems to reduce radioactive substances when gas and steam need to be released to prevent damage to reactor containment vessels. But they will be allowed to spend up to five years for installing the systems for pressurized water reactors, including the Oi Nos. 3 and 4.

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