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CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663
Angela Dauginas 630/829-9662
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST CENTERIOR SERVICE COMPANY
FOR FIRE PROTECTION VIOLATIONS AT DAVIS-BESSE NUCLEAR POWER
STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine against Centerior Service Company for failing to take actions to adequately protect certain equipment from possible damage which might result from a fire in the control room at its Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station.

The plant is located near Port Clinton, Ohio.

In 1992, the NRC issued an Information Notice to all nuclear power plant licensees that certain motor-operated valves could possibly be damaged because of electrical shorts in the control circuits during a fire in a plant's control room. The electrical short could damage the valve mechanism, placing it in a stalled condition. This condition would prevent reactor operators from being able to perform some shutdown functions manually.

In response to NRC's notice, the Davis-Besse plant staff conducted an initial evaluation of the affected motor-operated valves in 1994 and concluded that no action was necessary based on the low probability of a fire occurring in the control room.

An NRC inspection in March of this year reviewed the utility's evaluation and determined that the decision to take no action was unacceptable. The plant staff then conducted further evaluations and implemented corrective actions. These actions included modifications to the valve circuitry and procedural changes such that alternative valves would be used for safe shutdown of the reactor.

An subsequent NRC inspection June through August evaluated the utility's handling of the issue and reviewed the corrective actions taken.

"While the probability of a fire occurring as described in NRC regulations is low, the consequences of such an event occurring at Davis-Besse could have been high," said NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach in notifying the utility of the

proposed fine. "The ability to maintain the plant in safe shutdown condition, as required by fire protection regulations, could only have been achieved by significant operator actions, troubleshooting, and repair activities to compensate for the design deficiencies."

A predecisional enforcement conference, open to the public, was held between the utility and the NRC staff on September 26 to consider this violation and a second violation, involving inadequate radiant energy shields for electrical cables in the reactor containment. A Notice of Violation was issued for this second violation, but no fine was proposed.

Centerior Service Company has until November 21 to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

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