



NRC NEWS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC STAFF ISSUES ORDER TO FORMER CONTRACT FOREMAN FOR DELIBERATE MISCONDUCT AT BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a confirmatory order to a foreman employed by Stone and Webster Engineering Company at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry nuclear power plant for deliberate misconduct.

An NRC investigation determined that Robbie Balentine engaged in deliberate misconduct in early 2004 while acting as lead foreman for some paint removal activities inside the torus at Browns Ferry Unit 1. The torus is a large doughnut-shaped metal structure below the reactor vessel designed to capture excess steam in some accident scenarios.

The NRC's Office of Investigations found that Mr. Balentine willfully directed and allowed open blasting to be performed in violation of the requirements of a radiation work permit and verbal instructions. Balentine's deliberate misconduct resulted in an internal contamination event involving a painter under his supervision as well as a violation of a portion of the Browns Ferry nuclear plant license related to radiation protection.

The order issued to Balentine is a result of mediation under an NRC pilot program using a neutral third party. Under the order, Balentine agrees to take corrective actions including following all instructions, procedures and requirements governing NRC-licensed activities, ensuring that all those working for him do likewise and participating in any initiatives established by TVA or Stone and Webster to use this event as training for others.

As a result of this agreement, the NRC will not take further enforcement action against Balentine nor does the agency take any position on his suitability for employment at NRC-licensed facilities.

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