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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE PUBLIC SERVICE OF COLORADO  
\$62,500 FOR VIOLATIONS OF RADIATION PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has informed Public Service Company of Colorado that it proposes to fine the company \$62,500 for violations of NRC radiation-protection requirements at the Fort St. Vrain nuclear facility near Platteville, Colorado.

Public Service has 30 days to pay the civil penalty or to protest it. If a protest is denied, the company may ask for a hearing.

NRC is taking this action as the result of an incident on June 11, when a mechanic and a health physics technician received unplanned radiation exposures to their hands. The exposures, which did not approach NRC limits, occurred when these employees unknowingly handled highly radioactive material while decontaminating a shipping cask at the plant. Public Service informed NRC, which confirmed the circumstances in an inspection on June 21.

NRC has cited the company for failing to (1) make proper radiation surveys; (2) plan work adequately to be done in a radiation area; (3) instruct the workers properly about radiation hazard potential; and (4) supply appropriate personnel monitoring equipment to the two employees involved.

In his letter informing the company of the proposed fine, Robert D. Martin, NRC regional administrator in Arlington, Texas, said the violations created a potential for significant radiation exposures. He said NRC is particularly concerned because corrective actions Public Service took after a similar incident in September 1990 evidently did not prevent these latest violations from occurring. Its past performance in this regard resulted in the civil penalty being increased from the \$50,000 base amount for a violation of this sort.

Mr. Martin said the company launched some short-term corrective measures after NRC's inspection took place. He noted that Public Service has extensive long-term actions under way, and he urged that an understanding of radiation safety be instilled in all employees as decommissioning activities proceed at Fort St. Vrain.

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