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Tel. 301/504-2240

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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 CIVIL PENALTY
AGAINST CRYSTAL RIVER NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 civil penalty against Florida Power Corporation for alleged violation of NRC requirements at the Crystal River nuclear power plant which the company is licensed to operate near Crystal River, Florida.

The NRC said the proposed action was being taken because of an event at the plant on December 8, 1991, involving the handling of an automatic reactor shutdown and safety injection event while the unit was returning to service following a refueling outage.

While increasing reactor power from 10 percent in preparation for phasing the unit's output onto the power distribution grid, operators twice increased reactor power to approximately 15 percent of full power without an understanding of the cause of depressurization of the reactor cooling system. They also bypassed both trains of an engineered safety feature actuation system for high pressure injection of emergency cooling water.

While no damage to the reactor or its components occurred, the NRC staff said it was particularly concerned about the performance of the control room staff because:

- A critical nonroutine plant evolution was conducted on the midnight shift by a crew that had not trained together.
- The crew's initial response to the drop in reactor cooling system pressure was inadequate in that it did not focus on the symptom but rather on the expected results of a power increase.
- Inadequate command, control and communication by that crew resulted in bypassing a critical safety feature while the reactor was in the midst of a transient and before the cause was known.

- The senior reactor operator did not countermand the action in a timely manner and emergency operating procedures were exited by the operators before they completed all applicable steps.
- The control room staff failed to follow procedures that resulted in late notification of the event to the NRC and the state of Florida.

The NRC staff acknowledged that the company took comprehensive corrective actions and has a good record of past performance.

The company has 30 days to in which to pay the civil penalty or to protest its imposition, in whole or in part.

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