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(Thursday, June 18, 1992)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE DUQUESNE LIGHT  
COMPANY \$75,000

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has cited Duquesne Light Company for allegedly using the wrong wiring configuration for relays in electrical equipment at its Beaver Valley nuclear power plant in Shippingport, Pennsylvania, and has proposed a \$75,000 fine.

NRC regulations require that suitable parts are chosen and used correctly in safety-related systems and components. An NRC inspection between March 15, 1992, and April 18, 1992, found that the design change process for replacing parts on the emergency diesel generators (EDGs) load sequencer relays did not ensure the correct installation. As a result, the load sequencer relays were replaced in the EDG in September 1990 without the proper analysis to ensure the sequencers would continue to perform their intended safety function.

The EDGs are designed to start automatically after receiving an electrical signal to provide power to emergency core cooling systems when normal off-site power sources are lost. The load sequencers gradually add electric loads to match the available power output of the EDGs, and the relays control the actions of the sequencers. In this case, failure of the relays would prevent the sequencers from working properly, and that in turn would prevent some safety-related systems from being automatically added to the emergency power supply from the EDGs. The operators then would be required to manually control diesel generator loading.

In a letter to Duquesne Light, Thomas T. Martin, Regional Administrator for NRC Region I, said, "The NRC is also concerned with the apparent lack of formal communications between your staff and the vendor organization (Automatic Timing and Controls Company), regarding the installation of the EDG sequencer relays. Notwithstanding the importance and safety significance of the EDG load sequencers, you relied upon a verbal recommendation from the

vendor to support this design change. The NRC recognizes that, because the vendor considers the relay design information proprietary, you might not have kept the proprietary information. Nonetheless, as operator of the facility, you retain the responsibility for ensuring that changes in the design of safety-related components do not adversely affect the operation of those components."

Duquesne Light has 30 days to either pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that all or part of it be withdrawn, giving reasons for any such request. It also has 30 days to admit or deny the alleged violations, to give reasons for them, if admitted, to describe the actions it has taken or plans to take to prevent their happening in the future, and to give the date by which it will be in full compliance with NRC requirements.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been notified of this enforcement action.

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