

No. 92-12
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Friday, January 17, 1991)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE
CONSUMERS POWER COMPANY OF MICHIGAN \$100,000

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$100,000 fine against Consumers Power Company for violations of NRC requirements for the replacement of the steam generators at the Palisades nuclear power station in 1990-1991.

The violations were identified during NRC inspections at the Palisades plant from September 1990 through June 1991.

NRC inspectors found numerous deficiencies in the design calculations and specifications for piping and pipe supports associated with the replacement of steam generators. These problems included errors in calculation, incorrect analytical methods and misapplication of design requirements and specifications.

Since the inspections, the utility has initiated extensive corrective actions to improve its engineering program and to assure that the pipe and pipe support installations meet the design requirements.

The NRC inspections did not identify any single deficiency that required an immediate plant modification. As a result of the violations, however, some modifications may be made during future outages.

The number and extent of deficiencies indicated a breakdown in the design controls for the pipe and pipe support installations. As such, there was a potential for more significant errors.

Consumers Power did perform audits of its principal design contractor and found deficiencies similar to those identified by the NRC.

In notifying the utility of the fine, NRC Regional Administrator A. Bert Davis noted: "However, you failed to adequately address and correct those deficiencies on a broad scale, apparently because of schedule and production pressure."

He continued, "Had the NRC not become involved, it is not likely that your staff would have identified and corrected all of the deficiencies that were eventually identified."

Twenty-four violations were identified. These involved the failure to assure that design and regulatory requirements were correctly translated into design documents, failure to follow procedures, failure to promptly identify and correct design and installation problems and failure to obtain prior NRC approval for a change in the allowable stresses on certain piping under seismic conditions.

Consumers Power Company has until February 14, 1992, 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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