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No. 96-03
RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE

(Wednesday, January 3, 1996)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON
COMPANY VIOLATION OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT QUAD CITIES STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for failing to correct a potential problem with circuit breaker settings at the Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station.

The two-unit Quad Cities Station is located at Cordova, Illinois.

On October 4, a Unit 2 circuit breaker tripped because of excessive current. The tripped breaker interrupted power to some plant equipment, but the plant continued in operation.

The utility's investigation determined that electrical loads added through various changes in the plant resulted in the electrical overload. The circuit breaker setting had not been adjusted to accommodate the increased loads.

The utility was cited for failing to take adequate corrective action at Quad Cities as a result of a similar problem which occurred at Commonwealth Edison's Dresden Nuclear Power Station in 1994.

The Quad Cities station had been informed by internal utility documents at least three times of the potential overloading problem which occurred in the Dresden incident. In addition, Commonwealth Edison engineers identified five circuit breakers at Quad Cities as potentially overloaded in 1994, but corrective action was taken only for one.

Administrative controls at Quad Cities have been established to correct the potential overload conditions for the circuit breakers. Plans for plant modifications are being developed.

In notifying the utility of the fine, NRC Regional Administrator Hubert J. Miller noted that the utility had taken steps to improve its response to potential plant problems following a \$100,000 fine in 1994 for failing to adequately correct problems with the reactor control rod system. These

steps, including increased management oversight and improved root cause analysis, have not been entirely successful, he added.

Mr. Miller told Commonwealth Edison that the \$50,000 fine was being proposed "to emphasize the need for increased management involvement and

oversight of your corrective action program and more engineering rigor and involvement when reviewing potential plant deficiencies."

Commonwealth Edison has until February 1 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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