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FOR IMMEDIATE  
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$12,500 FINE AGAINST IOWA ELECTRIC  
FOR INADEQUATE BACKGROUND SCREENING OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$12,500 fine against Iowa Electric Light and Power Company for inadequately screening a temporary contract worker who was granted unescorted access to the Duane Arnold Energy Center. The Duane Arnold facility is located at Palo, Iowa.

The individual was hired in July 1993 as a temporary contract laborer, and he was given temporary unescorted access in the plant while an FBI criminal check was being conducted.

The utility did not review its files from the worker's previous employment at the Duane Arnold plant in 1990. The Federal Bureau of Investigation background check at that time showed that he had been arrested, convicted, and incarcerated several times. The FBI information was received after he had completed his work period at the plant.

NRC security regulations require that the utility fingerprint each individual who is to be granted unescorted access to the plant, submit the fingerprints to the FBI for a background check, and review and use the information received from the FBI in determine whether to grant or deny unescorted access.

The individual did not provide his criminal record in his employment application, either in 1990 or in 1993. When the FBI information was received in 1990, it was placed in a file, and the file marked to indicate that further evaluation was needed before the individual could be employed again. The file, however, was not reviewed prior to the second employment.

The situation was discovered when the utility received a second FBI report on August 13, 1993, as a result of the individual's hiring in 1993. The utility reported the matter to the NRC and, after reviewing the file information and interviewing the individual, terminated the individual's site access authorization.

According to the individual's supervisor, his behavior and work record at the plant were normal and no problems were noted. The utility took corrective action to improve its filing system and computer database system to note when an individual has been denied access.

Because the individual deliberately provided false information on his job application concerning his criminal record, the NRC has issued an order to him prohibiting him from working in NRC-regulated activities for a five-year period. For an additional five years, he must notify the NRC if he accepts employment in an NRC-regulated activity.

Iowa Electric has until May 5, 1994, to pay the proposed fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

The individual involved may request a hearing on the order prohibiting his employment in NRC-regulated activities. This request must be submitted by May 5, 1994.

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