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NRC TO HOLD OPEN ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE
MARCH 28 WITH ENTERGY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a predecisional enforcement conference Friday, March 28, with officials of Entergy Operations, Inc., the operator of Arkansas Nuclear One, a nuclear power plant near Russellville, Ark. The parties will discuss two apparent violations of NRC requirements.

The conference will begin at 10:30 a.m. at NRC Region IV offices in Arlington, Texas. The meeting will be open to public observation; NRC officials will be available afterwards for questions.

The apparent violations were identified during inspections completed October 22-29 and November 21-25, 1996. NRC inspectors found that an adequate lube oil leakage collection system had not been installed following a modification to Reactor Coolant Pump B at ANO Unit 1. This is in apparent violation of NRC fire protection requirements.

The inadequate lube oil leakage collection system allowed lube oil to leak from one of the plant's Reactor Coolant Pumps onto insulation around a steam generator. A fire broke out when oil ignited during plant startup on October 17, 1996. The fire was put out quickly without injury to workers or damage to plant equipment.

The second apparent violation involves three prior instances when ANO personnel failed to identify symptoms of oil leakage and take action that could have prevented the fire. These included opportunities to address reactor coolant pump design inadequacies, evidence of oil-soaked insulation and smoke coming from insulation during plant startup.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that NRC has made a final determination that violations did occur or that enforcement action, such as a monetary fine, will be taken. The purpose is to discuss the apparent violations, their causes and safety significance, and to provide Entergy officials an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report and present corrective actions that have been taken.

No decision on the apparent violations or any contemplated enforcement action, such as a civil penalty, will be made at this conference. Those decisions will be made by senior NRC officials at a later time.

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