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NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE OPPD
\$55,000 FOR VIOLATIONS AT FORT CALHOUN NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a civil penalty of \$55,000 against Omaha Public Power District, operator of Fort Calhoun Station, a nuclear power plant near Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, for violation of NRC fire protection requirements.

The violations, discussed during a predecisional enforcement conference on July 14, were identified during an NRC inspection completed May 2. They include five instances of failure to meet fire protection requirements. The first was failure to protect an emergency diesel generator speed sensing circuit from the effects of a control room or cable spreading room fire. OPPD identified this issue as a result of others raised by NRC during the inspection.

The second violation was failure to have in place a procedure providing operators sufficient guidance for combating a cable spreading room fire. The third was failure to equip reactor coolant pumps with adequate lube oil collection systems. The fourth was failure to declare the fire suppression water system inoperable and post fire watch personnel during system flushing operations. Finally, the plant failed to provide fire brigade personnel with classroom training in firefighting equipment every two years as required.

In a letter to OPPD, Ellis W. Merschoff, NRC Regional Administrator in Region IV said, "Although Fort Calhoun Station was not challenged by a fire, these violations collectively indicate a substantial failure to fully understand and implement all requirements of Appendix R [NRC regulation concerning fire protection] and the plant's fire protection program. In addition, at least one of the violations (Violation 1) had the potential, in the event of a fire, to damage equipment relied upon to achieve and maintain safe shutdown of the facility."

As corrective action, OPPD enhanced its audits of the fire protection program including a formal self-assessment, which has already been completed, and a detailed functional inspection scheduled for October. The individual violations have been remedied.

These violations have been classified in the aggregate as a severity level III problem. The NRC's enforcement system uses four severity levels, with level I being the most serious. OPPD has 30 days to respond in writing to the NRC's Notice of Violation. The response must document specific actions taken to prevent recurrence of the violations. During this time the company may pay the fine or file a protest.

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