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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$25,000 FINE FOR APPARENT VIOLATIONS
AT FORT CALHOUN STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has informed Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) that it proposes to fine the organization \$25,000 for apparent violations of NRC requirements at the Fort Calhoun Station nuclear power plant, 19 miles north of Omaha.

OPPD has 30 days to respond to the citation. During that time, it may pay the civil penalty or protest it. If a protest is denied, the power district may ask for a hearing.

NRC is taking this enforcement action as the result of findings from a special inspection conducted January 24-28 at the Fort Calhoun plant. That inspection was scheduled to review the circumstances surrounding these four incidents which occurred at the plant between mid-November 1993 and mid-January of this year:

- (1) An uncontrolled withdrawal of one of 49 control rods from the reactor core on November 13 when the plant was shut down for refueling.
- (2) Both trains of the auxiliary feedwater system being simultaneously made inoperable (unable to respond to an automatic initiation signal) for a brief period on December 9 while the plant was operating.
- (3) A failure, for about four hours, to place both trains of the control room ventilation system in recirculation mode when both plant toxic gas monitors became inoperable on December 30.
- (4) An unplanned dilution of the boron concentration in the reactor coolant system that caused reactor power to exceed 100 percent for an hour and a half (going to 100.573 percent power) on January 18.

NRC is citing OPPD for violations of plant procedures or license requirements in regard to the second, third and fourth incidents. No violations are being cited in regard to the control rod

withdrawal incident primarily because both equipment failure and

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a lack of specificity in a procedure were involved.

In his letter informing OPPD of the enforcement action, L. Joe Callan, NRC regional administrator, said the agency's concern springs from the fact that all these events occurred within an approximate two-month period.

"The violations...were caused by inattention to detail, a lack of command and control of licensed activities, and other performance-related weaknesses on the part of licensed operating personnel," he wrote. "Although none of these events posed a significant threat to the safety of the facility, our review...found that licensed operating personnel did not perform up to NRC expectations." He also said that, even though no citation is being issued for the uncontrolled control rod withdrawal, NRC believes that situation could have been avoided by operators "with appropriate training and regard for attention to detail." (An NRC augmented inspection team initially reviewed the circumstances of that incident last November. The inspection in January evaluated enforcement aspects.)

Mr. Callan said OPPD, during an enforcement conference with NRC in February, described in detail actions it is taking to correct non-complying conditions. These include immediate steps to fix hardware problems and improve deficient procedures, as well as development of an operations performance enhancement program for long-term improvements.

Because of OPPD's corrective measures, NRC reduced in half the \$50,000 base civil penalty for a problem of this sort.

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