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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$225,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON CO.
FOR RADIATION PROTECTION VIOLATIONS AT LASALLE NUCLEAR STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$225,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for violations of NRC radiation protection requirements at the LaSalle Nuclear Power Station. The two-reactor facility is located near Seneca, Illinois.

The company was cited for three violations, two of them involving the apparently deliberate placing of radioactive contamination on the stored personal clothing of two workers while they were working at the plant in November 1993. The third violation concerned the collection of a highly radioactive liquid sample from a tank without a survey to determine the radiation levels and potential hazards.

NRC Regional Administrator John B. Martin, in notifying the utility of the fine, stated: "These violations are further evidence of a significant breakdown in the LaSalle County Station radiation protection program and the failure of LaSalle Station management to establish and maintain a high level of respect for sound radiological safety practices and procedures at the facility."

The NRC had previously fined the utility \$112,500 for a September 7, 1993, incident in which 22 workers received radioactive contamination on their skin or clothing and 17 of them inhaled or ingested measurable amounts of radioactivity.

The resulting radiation exposures were a fraction of NRC limits for internal radiation exposure. The incident occurred while the Unit 2 reactor vessel head was being lifted in preparation for refueling.

The contamination incidents occurred on November 13 and 18, 1993. In each case low-level contamination was placed on the inside of separate workers' pants in changing rooms while the individuals were working in the plant.

The contamination was discovered after the workers changed into their personal clothing and passed through a radiation

monitor. The contamination was removed, and there was no significant radiation exposure associated with the incident.

A number of workers had access to the changing rooms, and investigations by both the NRC and the utility were unable to determine who placed the radioactive material in the clothing.

The company was cited in both instances for failing to ensure that radioactive material was used in accordance with NRC requirements.

The third violation involved in the \$225,000 fine concerned a radioactive waste supervisor and an operator who collected a highly radioactive liquid sample from a chemical waste storage tank.

The supervisor did not exercise prudent safety practices and did not make an effort to know the radiological contents of the tank prior to sampling. As a result, both the worker and supervisor received unnecessary radiation exposures. The exposures were within NRC limits and would not represent a significant health hazard.

While not cited as part of the proposed fine, the NRC staff also noted that there have been other instances of workers at the LaSalle Station failing to follow radiation protection procedures in late 1993 and early 1994.

Commonwealth Edison has until June 20, 1994, to pay the proposed fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the company may request a hearing.

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