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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$112,500 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON CO.
FOR RADIATION PROTECTION VIOLATIONS AT LASALLE NUCLEAR POWER
STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$112,500 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for violations of radiation safety requirements at the LaSalle Nuclear Power Station. The two-reactor facility is located near Seneca, Illinois.

The violations were associated with an incident September 7, 1993, in which 22 workers received radiation contamination on their skin or clothing and 17 of them inhaled or ingested measurable amounts of radioactivity. The workers were subsequently decontaminated. The radiation exposures resulting from the intake of radioactivity were a fraction of NRC limits for internal radiation exposures.

The incident occurred while the top of the Unit 2 reactor vessel was being removed in preparation for refueling.

Using pneumatic tools, workers were removing the large nuts which held the reactor top in place. The work activities caused radioactive contamination on the reactor components to become airborne where it was inhaled or ingested by the workers. Additional workers outside the work area were contaminated when the building ventilation system carried contamination to others areas. There was no release of radioactivity to the environment, however.

Commonwealth Edison was cited for three violations associated with the contamination incident: (1) failure to adequately evaluate the work and make necessary surveys of the reactor area while the job was in progress; (2) failure to use filtering systems or other equipment to limit airborne radioactivity in the reactor area; and (3) failure of the workers to wear respirators, as required by the plant's radiation protection procedures for work in radioactively contaminated areas.

The utility has undertaken corrective actions to improve its

radiation protection program. The NRC, however, has continued to observe problems which require continued attention by the utility.

"This situation requires sustained and intensive management oversight and involvement in radiation work activities," stated NRC Regional Administrator John B. Martin in notifying the utility of the fine.

Commonwealth Edison has until December 17, 1993, to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.

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