

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Office of Public Affairs, Region IV  
611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400  
Arlington, Texas 76011-8064

RIV: 99-03  
CONTACT: Breck Henderson  
OFFICE: 817-860-8128

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 2, 1999

NRC PROPOSES TO FINE ENTERGY \$55,000  
FOR VIOLATION AT RIVER BEND NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$55,000 civil penalty against Entergy Operations, Inc., which operates the River Bend Station, a nuclear power plant near St. Francisville, La.

The penalty is for the company's failure to promptly identify and correct design deficiencies in the compressed air system that controls the emergency diesel generators at River Bend. The diesels contained a pneumatic control logic system supplied with air by non-safety air compressors powered by a non-vital electrical supply. This design problem created substantial uncertainty as to whether the emergency diesels were capable of performing their intended safety function under certain circumstances.

Emergency diesels provide electrical power to safety-related components when normal power is lost. The problem with the control air system existed from original installation and was not fully corrected until last November. NRC discussed the matter with Entergy Operations in a predecisional enforcement conference on November 23 in the NRC Region IV office at Arlington Texas.

In a letter to Entergy Vice President Randall K. Edington, NRC Regional Administrator Ellis W. Merschoff said: "The NRC acknowledges the risk significance of this condition is low, primarily due to the low probability of the initiating event (i.e., a loss of offsite power). However, this situation is significant because it resulted in a condition where there was substantial uncertainty as to the ability of a safety system, designed to mitigate a serious safety event, being capable of performing its intended safety function under certain circumstances since original installation."

The violation was classified as a Severity Level III violation on the NRC's four-level scale. Level I is the most serious.

Entergy has 30 days to respond in writing to the NRC's Notice of Violation. The response must document specific actions to prevent recurrence of the violation. During this time the company may pay the fine or file a protest.

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