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Region III Office of Public Affairs  
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$88,000 FINE FOR INADQUATE SHUTDOWN  
PROCEDURES IN EVENT OF FIRE AT QUAD CITIES NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed an \$88,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for failing to develop adequate procedures and systems to safely shut down the Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station under certain fire conditions.

The two-reactor facility is located at Cordova, Illinois.

The NRC requires nuclear plant operators to have the capability of shutting down the reactor and maintaining it in a safe condition even if a possible fire damages safety equipment.

In notifying the utility of the fine, NRC Acting Regional Administrator James Caldwell said, "These violations represent a very significant safety concern because they involve inadequacies in ComEd's ability to shut down the Quad Cities facility following a postulated fire."

The deficiencies in the shutdown procedures were initially found by the utility in September of last year. ComEd promptly shut one reactor down and took compensatory measures for the other reactor, which remained in operation.

In December, the utility shut the second reactor down after the NRC inspectors found the shutdown procedures for the unit remaining in operation were still inadequate.

Both reactors remained shut down until May of this year for improvements to plant safety systems and procedures for use in the event of a fire.

Caldwell noted that the utility expected that its operators would have been able to safely shut down the plant in the event of a fire, based on their training and various procedures and on equipment not included in its fire safety analysis.

"However, the NRC concluded," Caldwell said, "that some equipment necessary to achieve safe shutdown may not be available or accessible and that reliance on unanalyzed impromptu measures...would not provide reasonable assurance that

operators could achieve post-fire shutdown conditions.”

In addition to the inadequacies in the shutdown procedures, the NRC staff also cited ComEd for initially changing its procedures to rely on an additional diesel generator without doing the necessary safety reviews.

The utility has until October 12 the pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, ComEd may request a hearing.

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