

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
Region III Office of Public Affairs  
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NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT: RIII-97-101 November 21, 1997  
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$100,000 FINE FOR TWO VIOLATIONS  
OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT PERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$100,000 fine against Centerior Services Co. for two violations of NRC safety requirements at the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located in Lake County, Ohio.

The first violation involved an increase in the power level of the reactor on November 9 of last year when a control valve was placed in service and unexpectedly increased the flow of water through the reactor. A similar incident occurred in 1994 but the utility's response to that incident, including training of reactor operators, was not sufficient to prevent the November 9 incident.

The reactor power level increased from 98 percent to 100.2 percent. This increase did not represent a safety concern, but indicated that reactor operators and other members of the Perry staff did not understand the possible effects of putting the control valve in service.

The utility was cited for failing to take adequate corrective action from the earlier incident, and a \$50,000 fine was proposed.

The second violation involved the failure of the utility to seek NRC approval for a change in its operating procedures for the emergency closed cooling system which would supply cooling water to plant equipment in the event of an accident.

Tanks that are part of that system were intended to provide a seven-day supply of water, but potential leakage in the system would have required plant operators to check the tank level periodically following a possible accident and possibly add water to the tanks. This need for operator action constituted a safety issue that required NRC review, but the utility did not seek that NRC review.

Subsequently, the utility tested the system in a more appropriate manner and demonstrated that there would be an

adequate supply of water in the tanks without the repetitive operator actions. The utility, therefore, rescinded the change in its procedures.

The potential safety consequences of this situation were low. The NRC, however, depends on utilities to perform an adequate safety analysis to determine if an issue requires NRC review. In this case, the Perry staff did not recognize the need to seek NRC review. Accordingly, a \$50,000 fine has been proposed.

No fine was proposed for a third violation involving a miswired electrical circuit breaker because of the extensive corrective action taken by the utility. This circuit breaker would have affected the operation of the emergency ventilation system for the plant's control room.

The NRC staff also considered enforcement action for another issue involving the potential of a possible fire in the control room to generate shorts in electrical circuits elsewhere in the plant. The staff decided not to issue a Notice of Violation or fine because the utility had taken extensive corrective actions to resolve the issue, including modifications to all affected equipment.

The utility has until December 19, 1997, 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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