

January 5, 1996

Mr. D. L. Farrar
Manager, Nuclear Regulatory Services
Commonwealth Edison Company
Executive Towers West III
1400 Opus Place, Suite 500
Downers Grove, IL 60515

SUBJECT: EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR 73.55, REQUIREMENTS FOR PHYSICAL PROTECTION OF LICENSED ACTIVITIES IN NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS AGAINST RADIOLOGICAL SABOTAGE - BYRON, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M94050 AND M94051)

Dear Mr. Farrar:

The Commission has issued the enclosed Exemption in response to your request dated November 6, 1995, to utilize an alternative access control system. This Exemption is from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55 relating to the issuance, storage, and retrieval of picture badges for individuals who have been granted unescorted access into the protected areas of the Byron site.

The alternative system will require individuals with unescorted access to protected areas to not only have their picture badges to gain access, but also have their hand geometry confirmed. Upon implementation of the hand geometry biometric system at the entrance/exit to the protected area, the Exemption will allow all individuals not employed by the licensee (e.g., contractors), who have unescorted access, to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Byron site.

A copy of this Exemption is being sent to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:
George F. Dick, Jr., Project Manager
Project Directorate III-2
Division of Reactor Projects III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. STN 50-454, STN 50-455

Enclosure: Exemption

cc w/encl: see next page

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Commonwealth Edison Company

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)
COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY) Docket Nos. STN 50-454
(Byron Station,) and STN 50-455
Units 1 and 2))

EXEMPTION

I.

Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd, the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License Nos. NPF-37 and NPF-66, which authorize operation of Byron Station, Units 1 and 2 (the facilities). The licenses provide, among other things, that the facilities are subject to all the rules, regulations, and Orders of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

The facilities are pressurized water reactors located at the licensee's site in Ogle County, Illinois.

II.

In 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for Physical Protection of Licensed Activities in Nuclear Power Reactors Against Radiological Sabotage," paragraph (a), in part, states that "the licensee shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization which will have as its objective to provide high assurance that activities involving special nuclear material are not inimical to the common defense and security and do not constitute an unreasonable risk to the public health and safety."

In 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," paragraph (1), it specifies that "the licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." Also, 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) requires that "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." It further states that individuals not employed by the licensee (e.g., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without escort provided that the individual, "receives a picture badge upon entrance into a protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area...."

The licensee proposes to implement an alternative unescorted access system which would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve picture badges at the entrance/exit location to the protected area and would allow all individuals, including contractors, to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Byron site.

III.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.5, "Specific exemptions," the Commission may, upon application of interested person or upon its own initiative, grant such exemptions from the requirements of the regulations in this part as it determines are authorized by law and will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security, and are otherwise in the public interest. According to 10 CFR 73.55, the Commission may authorize a licensee to provide alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage provided the licensee demonstrates that the alternative measures have the same "high assurance" objective, that the proposed measures meet the general performance requirements of the regulation, and that the overall level of system

performance provides protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which would be provided by the regulation.

Currently, unescorted access into the Byron Station, Units 1 and 2, is controlled through the use of picture badges. Positive identification of personnel who are authorized and request access into the protected area is established by security personnel making a visual comparison of the individual requesting access and that individual's picture badge. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor personnel are not allowed to take their picture badges off site. In addition, in accordance with the plant's physical security plan, the licensee's employees are also not allowed to take their picture badges off site.

The proposed system will require that all individuals with authorized unescorted access have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their picture badge number in a computerized access control system. Therefore, all authorized individuals must not only have their picture badge to gain access to the protected area, but must also have their hand geometry confirmed. All individuals, including contractors, who have authorized unescorted access into the protected area will be allowed to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Byron site.

All other access processes, including search function capability and access revocation, will remain the same. A security officer responsible for access control will continue to be positioned within a bullet-resistant structure. It should also be noted that the proposed system is only for individuals with authorized unescorted access and will not be used for those individuals requiring escorts.

Sandia National Laboratories conducted testing which demonstrated that the hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance characteristics. Details of the testing performed are in the Sandia report, "A Performance Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91--0276 UC--906 Unlimited Release, June 1991. Based on the Sandia report and the licensee's experience using the current photo picture identification system, the false acceptance rate for the proposed hand geometry system would be at least equivalent to that of the current system. To assure that the proposed system will continue to meet the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), the licensee will implement a process for testing the system. The site security plans will also be revised to allow implementation of the hand geometry system and to allow employees and contractors with unescorted access to keep their picture badges in their possession when leaving the Byron site.

IV.

For the foregoing reasons, the NRC staff has determined that the proposed alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage meet the same high assurance objective and the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55. In addition, the staff has determined that the overall level of the proposed system's performance will provide protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which is provided by the current system in accordance with 10 CFR 73.55.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 73.5, this exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest.

Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the following exemption:

The requirement of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) that individuals who have been granted unescorted access and are not employed by the licensee are to return their picture badges upon exit from the protected area is no longer necessary. Thus, these individuals may keep their picture badges in their possession upon leaving the Byron site.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact (60 FR 67369).

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 5th day of January 1996.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Elinor G. Adensam, Deputy Director
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation