



NRC NEWS

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NRC ISSUES \$60,000 FINE FOR INATTENTIVE CONTROL ROOM SUPERVISOR AT PILGRIM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT AND INITIAL INAPPROPRIATE RESPONSE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$60,000 civil penalty for Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc., for violations that occurred at the Pilgrim nuclear power plant on June 29, 2004. The violations involve a control room supervisor who was asleep for approximately 4 minutes while on duty in the control room, and improper response by a shift manager and reactor operator after observing the inattentive supervisor.

After the NRC learned of the event, the agency's Region I Office of Investigations began an investigation at the plant, which is located in Plymouth, Mass., and operated by Entergy. That investigation determined, among other things, that the supervisor in question fell asleep in a chair and was therefore inattentive to his duties. (Public safety was still assured because another reactor and senior reactor operator were also on duty in the control room at the time.)

Based on the investigation's findings, the NRC has identified four violations of agency requirements. Specifically, they involve: (1) the control room supervisor being asleep and therefore neither alert nor attentive to his duties; (2) a reactor operator observing the supervisor asleep but deliberately failing to take immediate actions to awaken him, inform appropriate site personnel and file a report on the event; (3) the shift manager, in careless disregard of requirements, failing to inform appropriate site personnel and file a report on the event; and (4) the control room supervisor not being relieved of duty and subjected to fitness-for-duty testing.

"Although there was no actual safety consequence resulting from this event because there were no plant conditions that warranted immediate action, it is important for licensed operators to be alert and attentive to their control room duties at all times so that they can adequately monitor the reactor, manipulate reactor controls, and react to any plant transients," NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins wrote in a letter to Entergy regarding the enforcement action. "It is also important that when licensed operators are not alert or attentive to their duties, appropriate action must be taken to immediately correct the situation and inform management."

In addition to the fine proposed for Entergy, the NRC is issuing a Severity Level III violation to the reactor operator involved; a Severity Level III violation to the control room supervisor; and a

Letter of Reprimand to the shift manager. The Letter of Reprimand for the shift manager is based on a settlement agreement reached under the NRC's Alternate Dispute Resolution Process. It acknowledges that under the agreement, the shift manager will conduct outreach to peers at Pilgrim and other licensed operators in the nuclear industry regarding his experience and lessons learned. These commitments have been put in place by a confirmatory order.

Entergy has taken several steps in response to the event, including conducting training on behavioral observation and other topics, as well as senior managers meeting with plant personnel to discuss the event, fitness-for-duty obligations and safety conscious work environment requirements.

The company will have 30 days to respond to the enforcement action.

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