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NRC Proposes \$70,000 Fine for Violations at Watts Bar Nuclear Plant Unit 2

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$70,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority for violations related to the commercial grade dedication program during the construction of Watts Bar nuclear plant Unit 2. The Watts Bar plant, where one unit has been in operation since 1996, is located near Spring City, Tenn., about 60 miles southwest of Knoxville.

The NRC requires certain components in a nuclear plant to meet strict nuclear quality assurance standards. Commercial grade dedication is a process that provides reasonable assurance that components purchased from a commercial supplier are equivalent to nuclear grade items. This assurance is achieved through documented inspections, tests or analyses.

An NRC [inspection](#) conducted in late 2012 and early this year identified three violations related to the Watts Bar Unit 2 commercial grade dedication program. NRC inspectors found a breakdown in the program resulting in construction of unknown quality, a failure to report that breakdown and a failure to identify that issue as a significant condition affecting quality.

“While TVA has aggressively addressed these issues, the violations and proposed civil penalty emphasize the importance of an effective quality assurance program during construction as well as prompt identification and reporting of any related breakdowns,” said NRC Region II Deputy Administrator for Construction Fred Brown.

At a conference in early May, TVA outlined a number of corrective actions including a review of all commercial grade dedication documents, additional staff training and creating a new position to oversee the process. The NRC also noted that TVA continues to test items that have already been purchased or installed.

TVA has 30 days to respond to the violations and either pay the civil penalty or protest its imposition.

A copy of the [letter](#) sent to TVA is available on the NRC website.