



UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20555

No. 94-158
Tel. 301/415-8200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Thursday, October 13, 1994)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$80,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON CO. FOR FITNESS-FOR-DUTY VIOLATIONS AT QUAD CITIES NUCLEAR STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed an \$80,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for failing to follow its fitness-for-duty program after receiving credible information that a manager may not have been fit for duty while at the Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station.

The incident occurred on April 23 when a manager voluntarily reported to the plant in the evening after being notified of a problem involving a transformer.

About 45 minutes after the manager arrived, two control room supervisors reported to the Shift Engineer that they each smelled alcohol on the manager's breath. The utility's fitness-for-duty policy requires that all personnel reporting for the work shall be alcohol free.

The Shift Engineer subsequently confronted the manager with the supervisors' report, and the manager stated that he had had one drink earlier in the evening. (The manager later indicated that he had had three or four alcoholic drinks that evening.) The Shift Engineer noticed no evidence of aberrant behavior by the manager.

The Shift Engineer concluded that a for-cause test for alcohol was required. The test, however, was not conducted promptly. The manager continued to work in the control room and elsewhere in the plant.

The alcohol test, which was performed more than three hours after the initial observation, confirmed a blood alcohol level of .074. The NRC limit is .04 for such tests.

The utility suspended the manager's access to the plant site after the test. He subsequently resigned.

Commonwealth Edison was cited for failing to follow its NRC-required fitness-for-duty program for (1) failing to suspend the manager's access to the plant after determining that his fitness was questionable; and (2) failing to promptly test the manager for alcohol.

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"The violations represent a failure to take reasonable and timely action when credible information concerning activities within the plant indicates possible unfitness for duty based on alcohol use," stated NRC Regional Administrator John B. Martin in notifying the company of the fine.

The utility has taken corrective actions, including supplemental training for plant personnel on the fitness-for-duty program.

Commonwealth Edison has until November 14 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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