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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON CO.  
FOR VIOLATION OF SHIPPING REQUIREMENTS FOR RADIOACTIVE WASTE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for a violation of federal transportation regulations in the August 11 shipment of radioactive waste from the Dresden Nuclear Power Station at Morris, Illinois.

The outside surface of the shipping container had a radiation level which exceeded the U. S. Department of Transportation limit when the container arrived at a waste handling facility in Tennessee. The surface measurement was 350 millirem per hour; the federal limit is 200 millirem per hour.

The shipping container was one of nine containing radioactively contaminated pipes and valves which had been removed and replaced during a refueling and maintenance outage at Dresden Unit 2.

Radiation measurements before the container left the Dresden Station were within the limit, but a pipe in the container apparently shifted en route, increasing the surface radiation level. The pipe had not been adequately braced in the shipping container to prevent it from shifting.

Because the radiation level was localized and the shipment went directly to the processing facility, there were no apparent unnecessary radiation exposures to the driver or members of the public.

In notifying the utility of the fine, Hubert J. Miller, NRC Regional Administrator, said: "A lack of ownership and management oversight of the radioactive material shipping program, compounded by confusion on the part of workers to fully understand their roles and responsibilities, resulted in the violation."

Following the incident, the utility took comprehensive corrective actions, including temporarily stopping shipping activities, strengthening the management of the radiation protection program, and controlling the schedules for shipments being made.

Commonwealth Edison has until January 4 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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