

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, DC 20555
Phone 301-415-8200 Fax 301-415-2234
Internet: opa@nrc.gov

No. 96-01

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Wednesday, January 3, 1996)

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE NYPA \$50,000 FOR ALLEGED
VIOLATIONS OF NRC REQUIREMENTS AT THE INDIAN POINT 3
NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has cited the New York Power Authority (NYPA) for four alleged violations of NRC requirements at its Indian Point 3 nuclear power plant in Buchanan, N.Y. The staff has proposed a \$50,000 fine.

The alleged violations were identified during an NRC inspection conducted in response to an event that occurred at the plant on October 15 during which operators took the plant from a cold shutdown mode with the control switches for the recirculation and containment spray pumps in an improper position.

The plant's technical specifications require that at least one recirculation pump and two containment spray pumps be operable prior to entering the hot shutdown condition. However, on October 15, the reactor was heated above the cold shutdown condition (200 degrees Fahrenheit) with both recirculation pumps and both containment spray pumps inoperable because of the position of these control switches. In the position the switches were placed, the containment spray pumps would not have automatically started if needed, and the normal sequence for manually starting the recirculation pumps was altered. This condition existed for about four hours until it was identified by a member of the licensee's quality assurance (QA) staff during his review of control room conditions.

In a letter to the licensee NRC Region I Administrator Thomas T. Martin commended the QA staff member for identifying the condition, which was promptly corrected. Mr. Martin said the safety significance of the alleged violations was minimal, but the violations are significant because several members of the operations staff failed to identify the problem. These failures by the operations staff constitute three additional violations of NRC requirements. The NRC staff gave the licensee credit for identifying the violation and promptly correcting it. A civil penalty of \$50,000 was proposed because of the poor performance of the operations staff.

NYPA has 30 days either to pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that part or all of it be withdrawn. The company also has 30 days to admit or deny the alleged violations and to describe the actions it has taken or plans to take to prevent recurrence.

The State of New York has been informed of this enforcement action.

###

9601050041 960103
PDR PRESS R
HG-96-01 PDR

PROL
011