

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
Region III Office of Public Affairs  
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NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT: RIII-96-18  
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$100,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON CO.  
FOR VIOLATIONS OF NRC SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AT BRAIDWOOD PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$100,000 fine against Commonwealth Edison Company for numerous instances of failure to maintain the proper alignment of plant safety-related systems and for failing to take corrective actions to prevent recurring problems.

Problems which brought about this enforcement action occurred during 1995 and have continued this year. For the most part, they involve work on systems which have been taken out of service. Both NRC and Commonwealth Edison have found an adverse trend in this regard.

In a letter informing Commonwealth Edison of the civil penalty, Hubert J. Miller, NRC regional administrator in Lisle, Illinois, said this record of recurring problems of this sort "represents a significant lack of attention towards licensed responsibilities." He noted that the utility's own trend analysis identified a number of root causes, "including poor accountability and commitment, poor planning and scheduling, unclear expectations, poor communications, and poor root cause investigations."

Mr. Miller's letter and the accompanying notice of violation listed these incidents this year which were associated with the proposed fine:

- Jan. 23-24: Hydrogen monitor system made inoperable when operators improperly shut some valves.
- March 5: Flange bolts loosened, leaving a potential for making the emergency core cooling system inoperable during pump maintenance.
- March 12: A ventilation fan was approved for operation after maintenance even though it was still disassembled.
- March 13: A containment chill water pump was uncoupled from a motor without proper authorization.

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- March 18: A reactor alarm signal activated while a worker was hanging "out-of-service" cards.
- March 23: Reactor cooling system drain valves mispositioned.
- April 16: Valve internals removed without proper isolation causes a 3,000-gallon water spill inside the plant.
- April 24: An air system was cross-connected to a water system.

Commonwealth Edison has until June 15 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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