



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$60,000 FINE AGAINST INDIANA MICHIGAN POWER FOR EMERGENCY PLAN VIOLATION AT D. C. COOK NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$60,000 fine against Indiana Michigan Power Co. for making a change in the emergency plan of the D. C. Cook Nuclear Power Station which led to a decrease in the plan's effectiveness. The plant, which has two reactors, is located in Bridgman, Mich.

An NRC inspection identified that Cook officials made a change to the plant's emergency plan without Commission approval in April 2003. The NRC concluded that this change decreased the effectiveness of the emergency plan.

The licensee made a change to an emergency action level by adding a non-conservative 30-minute criteria which could result in a delayed emergency declaration for a radiological release to the environment. Emergency action levels are used in emergency plans to decide when a plant must declare an emergency and to classify the appropriate level of the emergency. The addition of a 30-minute delay before classifying an emergency could also delay or prevent notification of state and local officials.

Nuclear power plants may make changes to emergency plans without Commission approval only if the changes do not decrease the effectiveness of the plans and that the plans continue to meet regulatory standards.

"Effective emergency plans are crucial to stabilizing the plant and protecting the public in case of a nuclear plant emergency," said James Caldwell, NRC Regional Administrator. "It is especially important in the current post 9/11 environment." In notifying the utility of the fine, he acknowledged that Indiana Michigan Power Co. had taken extensive corrective actions by restoring the emergency plan to NRC-approved language and training plant personnel to emphasize the importance of maintaining the effectiveness of the plant's emergency plan and procedures.

The letter notifying Indiana Michigan Power Co. of the proposed fine will be available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html#reactor>

Indiana Michigan Power Co. has until Nov. 6 to pay the proposed 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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