



NRC NEWS
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$100,000 FINE AGAINST COMMONWEALTH EDISON
FOR VIOLATIONS INVOLVING STRUCTURAL STEEL DESIGN DEFICIENCIES
AT DRESDEN AND QUAD CITIES NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed \$100,000 in fines against Commonwealth Edison Company for design deficiencies at its Dresden and Quad Cities Nuclear Power Stations.

The two plants are similar in design, and each has two reactors. Dresden is located near Morris, Illinois, and Quad Cities is in Cordova, Illinois.

The utility was cited for failing to promptly correct design deficiencies in structural steel beams and supports for components in one of the plants' emergency core cooling systems. A \$50,000 fine was proposed for each facility for a total fine of \$100,000 to the utility.

In 1991 the utility's architect-engineer determined that modifications to pipe supports and structural steel in the 1980's had not been evaluated to determine their effect on seismic design criteria. (Safety-related plant structures and systems must be designed to function during and after an earthquake.)

The modifications resulted in additional loads on the steel beams and supports which, in some cases, exceeded those permitted in the original plant design.

These deficiencies were not corrected until February 1996 at Quad Cities and until March 1996 for Dresden Unit 2. The Dresden Unit 3 deficiencies will be corrected in the Fall 1996 refueling outage.

"We are concerned that the engineering decision process failed to ensure timely action to restore design margins," said NRC Regional Administrator Hubert J. Miller in notifying the utilities of the proposed fines. "Commonwealth Edison personnel were aware of the design deficiency for over five years without effective resolution."

The utility has until July 15 to pay the fine or to protest it. If Commonwealth Edison protests the fine and it is subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the utility may request a hearing.