

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region II
101 Marietta Street, N.W.
Suite 2900
Atlanta, GA 30323

No: II-96-97
Contact: Ken Clark (404) 331-5503
Roger Hannah (404) 331-7878

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$50,000 FINE AGAINST TVA AT SEQUOYAH

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$50,000 civil penalty against the Tennessee Valley Authority for alleged noncompliance with federal requirements related to the fire protection program at the Sequoyah nuclear power plant near Chattanooga.

In a letter to TVA dated November 19, Stewart D. Ebnetter, Administrator of the NRC's Region II office in Atlanta, said the fine was being proposed because TVA has not completed corrective actions for long-standing fire protection program discrepancies. These deficiencies include quality assurance issues identified by TVA in 1992, 1994 and 1995; a number of fire dampers at the plant that did not comply with design and installation requirements; and the continued failure to control combustibles and transient fire loads (such as temporary wooden scaffolding or cleaning rags) in the plant in accordance with procedure requirements.

Ebnetter said the carbon dioxide (CO₂) fire suppression system for the plant computer room was rendered inoperable in May of 1990 during modifications which added penetrations to the room but failed to equip the penetrations with fire dampers designed to close and isolate the room during CO₂ activation. He added that TVA also failed to perform a required 18-month test on Auxiliary Building penetrations in high radiation areas and failed to demonstrate the operability of fire hose stations in the reactor buildings by failing to assure that hoses for those stations had undergone hydrostatic tests.

Ebnetter said TVA has stationed fire watch personnel to assure compliance but that the violations "are of significant regulatory concern because they represent a significant lack of attention and priority to the overall fire protection program."

The company has 30 days to either pay the fine or to protest its imposition.

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