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NRC PROPOSES TO FINE ENTERGY \$55,000  
FOR VIOLATION AT RIVER BEND NUCLEAR PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$55,000 civil penalty against Entergy Operations, Inc., which operates the River Bend Station, a nuclear power plant near St. Francisville, La. The proposed fine is the culmination of a case in which the plant's Superintendent of Radiation Control deliberately gave the NRC incomplete and inaccurate information concerning a violation of radiation protection requirements for plant workers.

The specific circumstances of the violation are as follows:

- On October 10, 1997, an NRC inspector observed a minor infraction of radiation work permit requirements as a contract worker reached into a marked radiation area to check for contamination without proper protective clothing. No one was contaminated or injured during the incident.
- On October 15, 1997, in asserting to the NRC Senior Resident Inspection that the reported activity did not violate procedures, the superintendent presented incomplete and inaccurate information, which is also a violation of NRC requirements.
- An investigation by NRC's Office of Investigations concluded that the superintendent knew the information was inaccurate at the time he presented it to the senior resident inspector. Predecisional enforcement conferences on the issue were held with Entergy officials on June 26, 1998, and with the Superintendent on February 27, 1998.

NRC Regional Administrator Ellis Merschoff said in a letter to River Bend Station Vice President Randall K. Edington, "The NRC must be able to rely on licensee managers providing complete and accurate information on matters involving compliance with requirements. A willful violation of [NRC regulations] involving a licensee manager can result in a Severity Level I violation . . . In consideration of the relatively low safety significance of the underlying issue . . . and in consideration of the individual's position within the company, the violation has been classified at Severity Level III."

The NRC employs a four-level scale to rate the severity of violations, with Level I being the most serious.

The NRC also has issued a Severity Level III Notice of Violation, with no civil penalty, to the Superintendent of Radiation Control. In his letter to the superintendent Mr. Merschoff said, "The integrity of licensee managers is a matter that the NRC views as particularly important."

Entergy has 30 days to respond in writing to the NRC's Notice of Violation. The response must document specific actions to prevent recurrence of the violation. During this time the company may pay the fine or file a protest.

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