



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$88,000 FINE AGAINST CONSOLIDATED EDISON OF NEW YORK FOR VIOLATIONS STEMMING FROM SHUTDOWN WITH COMPLICATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed an \$88,000 fine against Consolidated Edison Company of New York for violations associated with a reactor shutdown with complications that occurred at the Indian Point 2 nuclear power plant in Buchanan, N.Y., last August 31.

This fine is unrelated to the events which occurred on February 15, when an Alert -- the second lowest of four levels of emergency classification -- was declared due to steam generator tube leakage at the plant. The company immediately shut down the reactor, and exited the Alert the next day. The NRC has sent an Augmented Inspection Team to the site to review the event and its causes.

In response to the August event, the NRC conducted three inspections between September and November. The apparent violations were forwarded to the company in a letter dated January 5. Since then, the NRC has evaluated the apparent violations as part of its enforcement decision-making process and has determined that this fine is warranted.

At 2:30 p.m. on August 31, the Buchanan, N.Y., plant experienced an automatic shutdown. A few minutes after the shutdown, the plant's three emergency diesel generators, which provide power in the event of the loss of off-site power, automatically started after receiving a signal indicating that insufficient voltage was available to some safety systems. Once the emergency diesel generators began operating, they became the primary source of power to the plant rather than off-site power, the normal source.

One of the generators, however, failed to load properly, leading to the eventual draindown of one of four batteries that serve as a backup power source. In turn, the plant lost many of its control room annunciators, or alarm panels, for safety-related equipment. The plant also lost the use of some safety equipment, including part of the auxiliary feedwater system and one pressure-operated relief valve, reducing safety system redundancy.

Plant operators declared an Unusual Event -- the lowest of four levels of emergency classification -- at about 9:55 p.m. Power was restored to the affected safety equipment early on the morning of September 1.

In response to the event, NRC staff conducted three inspections at Indian Point 2 to review the causes and safety implications of the reactor trip, plant staff's actions related to the shutdown, Consolidated Edison's short-term corrective actions and self-assessment activities, and compliance with NRC rules and regulations relative to this event.

Three violations of NRC requirements have been identified. They involve:

- A failure to translate the plant's design basis requirements into procedures when a modification was made to some relays associated with power supplies for safety-related equipment. This contributed to the loss of off-site power during the event.
- Inadequate calibration of settings for one of the emergency diesel generators. If the settings had been correct, the supply of emergency power to some safety-related equipment most likely would not have been lost. Because of the miscalibration, the affected generator was inoperable from May 27 to August 31.
- A failure to correct and prevent recurrence of spurious activations of a reactor protection system instrument, which led to the initiation of the reactor shutdown.

NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller, in a letter to Consolidated Edison notifying it of the enforcement action, wrote that the "NRC review of this event, as well as your follow-up reviews, revealed three principal concerns, namely, 1.) the failure to adequately control the configuration of certain plant equipment; 2.) the failure to identify and correct several of these problems beforehand, despite prior opportunities to do so; and 3.) weaknesses in management's initial response to the event, and its oversight of the subsequent recovery of safety-related equipment."

Mr. Miller also noted that once the violations were identified, Consolidated Edison's corrective actions were prompt and comprehensive. Those actions included several comprehensive investigations and the establishment of long-term improvement plans. If not for those actions, the penalty would have been higher.

Consolidated Edison is required to respond to the proposed action. That response will be used, in part, to determine whether future enforcement action is necessary.

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