



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC PROPOSES \$140,000 CIVIL PENALTY FOR RIVER BEND NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed a \$140,000 civil penalty against Entergy Operations, Inc. at the River Bend Station, for control room operators accessing the internet without authorization and failure by the utility to take timely corrective actions once the issue was identified. River Bend is located 24 miles northwest of Baton Rouge.

Control room operators are directly responsible for monitoring the reactor and other important plant systems to ensure that it is operated safely. Plant procedures require operators to remain attentive and focused on their work.

Between January and April 2010, nine operators deliberately violated those procedures and accessed the internet from the plant's control room while on duty. Three of the nine did so with such frequency and duration that they are being issued severity level III enforcement violations. The remaining six operators will receive severity level IV violations. The websites visited included news, sports, fishing and retirement account sites. The plant will receive a severity level III violation and a fine double the base civil penalty of \$70,000. Severity level I represents the greatest significance and Severity level IV is the lowest level.

“NRC relies on a good faith effort to comply with regulatory requirements. This action reflects the significance of the violation due to the number of people involved and the willful nature of their actions,” said Region IV Administrator Elmo E. Collins. “While the licensee has since taken steps to correct the problem and ensure it doesn't happen again, they did not promptly address the larger safety culture issue.”

The NRC resident inspectors were notified of the issue and NRC launched an investigation in July 2010. On Nov. 21, 2011, Entergy officials met with NRC at a pre-decisional enforcement conference to discuss their corrective actions. Based on all the information gathered, NRC has determined that the licensee did not take prompt corrective actions to effectively address the larger safety culture issues raised by the operators' actions.

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