



NRC NEWS

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NRC PROPOSES \$60,000 FINE AGAINST POINT BEACH NUCLEAR PLANT FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$60,000 fine against Nuclear Management Company for failing to provide complete and accurate information on the critique of an emergency preparedness drill at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Plant in August 2002. The plant is located near Two Rivers, Wis.

An NRC investigation concluded that two plant employees deliberately provided NRC inspectors with inaccurate information about the identification of a problem during the emergency drill.

The problem concerned the company's failure to identify an untimely declaration of an Alert classification during the August 2002 drill. During the drill, the plant staff failed to declare an Alert classification within the required 15 minutes after simulated plant conditions met the Alert criteria. An Alert is the second lowest classification in the system of four levels of nuclear emergencies.

The NRC investigation showed that the NRC, not the company, identified the problem of late declaration of the Alert during a post-drill critique. Subsequently, two plant employees falsified information on the drill performance evaluation form submitted to the NRC showing, incorrectly, that the drill deficiency was identified by the company.

The NRC also made a final determination that the plant's tardiness in making an emergency declaration and the failure to self-identify this weakness during a drill critique was a "white" issue, meaning it is of low to moderate importance to safety. The NRC classifies its findings in ascending order of safety importance from green to white, yellow and red.

"Declaring and classifying a nuclear emergency in a timely manner is crucial for proper and timely response to a nuclear accident. We require emergency drills to find and correct weaknesses in the plant's emergency preparedness programs so that the plant staff will be as ready as possible in case of a real event. If we are not provided with accurate information about the company's performance during a drill, neither the company nor the NRC will be able to address weaknesses in the plant's emergency preparedness program," said NRC Regional Administrator James Caldwell.

Nuclear Management Company has taken corrective measures that included disciplinary actions against the employees involved in the incident and counseling plant employees on the

importance of accurate oral and written communication with the NRC. The employees involved in providing the NRC with inaccurate information were dismissed by Nuclear Management Company.

In 2003 the NRC Office of Investigations referred this case to the U.S. Department of Justice. One of the employees appeared in the United States District Court, Green Bay, Wis., in June 2005 and pleaded guilty to knowingly making and delivering false written statements to the NRC. He was sentenced to one year of probation, with the conditions that he pay a fine and refrain from participating in any NRC-licensed activities. The second employee cooperated with the investigation and faced no criminal charges.

The notice to the company on the enforcement action will be available online at <http://www.nrc.gov/what-we-do/regulatory/enforcement/current.html> and from the NRC Region III Office of Public Affairs. Point Beach documents are available through the NRC's online document collection, known as ADAMS, at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> by entering docket numbers 50-266 and 50-301.

The company has until Jan. 17 to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the company may request a hearing.

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