

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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NRC STAFF PROPOSES \$55,000 FINE AGAINST ROBINSON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$55,000 civil penalty against Carolina Power & Light Company for violations of NRC requirements relating to emergency diesel generators at the Robinson nuclear power plant near Hartsville, South Carolina.

In August 1997, the NRC resident inspector discovered that the output breaker control switch for one of the emergency diesel generators was in the wrong position. The mispositioned switch caused that diesel generator to be inoperable for an undetermined period, but probably for at least four days. The emergency diesel generators provide emergency power to safety equipment if the plant loses offsite power. There were no actual safety consequences, but the potential safety consequences were high because the generator, if needed, would have been incapable of providing power.

In a letter to CP&L, NRC Regional Administrator Luis Reyes said that "the regulatory significance is also high" because of a similar event in November 1993 and "a failure to take adequate corrective action to preclude repetition." Reyes' letter also said "the importance of these controls should have been recognized given the absence of automatic alarms to alert operators to situations which could remain undetected until the EDG [*emergency diesel generator*] was called on to mitigate an accident."

The first violation cited involved the failure to identify promptly and correct the mispositioned switch. The second violation was the failure to take adequate corrective action to preclude repetition of position control errors.

The NRC staff has proposed a \$55,000 civil penalty for the two violations together.

The company has 30 days from receipt of the Notice of Violation to either pay the fine or protest its imposition.

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