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NRC Issues Confirmatory Order to Duke Energy for Violations at the Robinson Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a confirmatory order to Duke Energy for violations at the Robinson nuclear power plant, located near Hartsville, S.C., approximately 26 miles northwest of Florence. The company has agreed to a series of corrective actions related to fire watches and operator rounds at the Robinson plant and the company's five other nuclear power plant sites.

The order stems from a settlement reached under the NRC's Alternative Dispute Resolution process, which was requested by Duke Energy to address violations that occurred in 2017. The NRC found that on several occasions, employees failed to visually inspect assigned areas for signs of fire. Employees also failed to conduct operator rounds and deliberately signed logs indicating they had completed the rounds and fire watches.

The NRC's ADR is a mediation process facilitated by a neutral third party with no decision-making authority, who assists the NRC and a licensee in reaching an agreement when there are differences regarding issues or potential enforcement actions.

A mediation session was held between the NRC staff and Duke Energy on Dec. 16, 2019, where a settlement was reached. The confirmatory order, issued on March 11, outlines the corrective actions and steps Duke Energy has taken and agreed to take to address the violations.

The corrective actions include internal communications with the Robinson plant staff regarding the expectations of fire watches and operator rounds, additional training requirements, and revising or updating procedures related to those activities. Duke Energy has also implemented or agreed to similar corrective actions at the other five nuclear power plants operated by the company and has agreed to conduct periodic reviews of the corrective actions to ensure their effectiveness.