



NRC NEWS

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NRC COMPLETES ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS FOR INDIAN POINT NEW SIREN SYSTEM INSTALLATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has completed enforcement actions associated with delays in making the new siren system at the Indian Point nuclear plant operational.

Over the last two years, the NRC staff has levied fines totaling \$780,000 against Entergy Nuclear Operations Inc. over the installation and launch of the new siren system. Collectively the two fines of \$130,000 and \$650,000 levied in 2007 and 2008 respectively, represent one of the largest penalties assessed by the agency.

Following an inspection performed late last year, the NRC staff concluded that Entergy had addressed the relevant issues and successfully, albeit belatedly, placed the new siren system into operation and met NRC requirements. The agency staff concluded that no additional enforcement action was necessary and noted that after the January 2008 fine Entergy's performance improved substantially.

Entergy placed the new system in service on Aug. 27, 2008. The NRC follow-up inspection of Entergy's handling of the project was conducted from Nov. 17 to Dec. 16, 2008. The team of inspectors evaluated, among other things, whether Entergy had performed adequate root-cause evaluations of the problems that affected the project timeliness and whether its corrective actions were thorough and appropriate. The team found that appropriate actions had been taken in those areas and concluded Indian Point now complies with NRC orders on the plant's Emergency Notification System (ENS).

"The NRC views the ability to notify surrounding populations of an emergency at a plant as a critical element in the agency mission of protecting people and the environment. While there always was an operating system capable of performing that job while the time new sirens were being installed, the manner in which the installation was accomplished failed to meet our expectations, hence the very substantial fines," said NRC Region I administrator Samuel J. Collins. "After the second fine, Entergy began to meet its deadlines."

The new siren system, now available to notify the public in the event of a significant event at the plant, is equipped with 172 sirens located throughout the roughly 10-mile-radius Emergency Planning Zone for the facility.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 included a provision directing the NRC to require nuclear power plants with high local population densities to have back-up power for their emergency notification systems, including sirens. Indian Point was the only nuclear power plant that fell within the requirement.

The NRC took several enforcement actions to ensure that the new siren system was installed properly. In January 2006, the NRC first issued a Confirmatory Order requiring the installation of back-up power for the siren system at Indian Point by Jan. 30, 2007. Entergy, in January 2007, requested and received an extension but missed the new deadline of April 15, 2007. The NRC denied a second extension, and fined the company \$130,000 for missing the deadline. A second order was issued in July 2007, with a new deadline of Aug. 24, 2007. After Entergy missed that deadline, the NRC issued a \$650,000 fine in January 2008 “because of the significant regulatory engagement to date that has been necessary to achieve resolution of this issue and Entergy's inadequate actions” in support of the review of the system by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and “inadequate management oversight.” Since then, Entergy met project milestones culminating with placing the new system in service.

During the recent follow-up inspection, NRC inspectors also reviewed Entergy's program that involves the distribution of Tone Alert Radios to certain areas of the Indian Point Emergency Planning Zone. It was determined the supplemental radios were needed for certain locations where siren sound levels were not sufficient due to local terrain. The inspectors concluded that Entergy had acted in a timely manner to develop and implement the program.

The NRC will continue to provide oversight of the new ENS as part of its inspection program. In addition, after the system has been in service for a year, Entergy is required to submit a final design report, which, among other things, describes the ENS reliability test results for the year. That report will be evaluated by FEMA.

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