

No: III-13-039

October 28, 2013

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NRC Issues Orders to Dresden Nuclear Plant and Former Plant Employees

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a confirmatory order to Exelon Generation Company, LLC for one incident involving violations of the Behavioral Observation Program at the Dresden Nuclear Power Station. In addition, the NRC issued orders prohibiting two former Dresden employees involved in the situation from participating in nuclear work regulated by the NRC. Dresden is located in Morris, Ill., 25 miles southwest of Joliet.

The NRC investigated the incident in which senior reactor operator Michael J. Buhrman, planned to rob an armored car and recruited the assistance of another senior reactor operator, Landon E. Brittain. The plan was not carried out. However, Buhrman was apprehended for aggravated vehicular carjacking and fled the country after being released on bail. He was tried and sentenced in absentia. Brittain has a number of criminal charges pending against him.

The NRC concluded that Buhrman's and Brittain's actions while offsite demonstrated they could not be relied upon to adhere to NRC requirements to protect plant and public safety. In addition, Dresden personnel who knew about Buhrman's plan to commit an offsite crime failed to report the situation to plant management, which is an NRC requirement for workers who have unescorted access to the plant.

"We expect nuclear workers to be trustworthy and feel responsible for plant safety. This includes alerting management should they encounter questionable behavior in other workers. Plants must have effective programs and training to make sure employees adhere to these standards," said NRC Region III Administrator Cynthia D. Pederson. "The incident at Dresden shows a failure to adhere to NRC requirements. This situation was unusual; we do not normally encounter this type of egregious behavior in plant workers. For this reason, the NRC has taken strong regulatory action against the individuals involved and the plant. Exelon is taking steps to address the problem and we will evaluate their effectiveness going forward."

The confirmatory order to Exelon was issued as a result of the Alternative Dispute Resolution process, which uses a mediator to assist the NRC and a licensee to reach an agreement for a more effective use of the enforcement process. The company agreed to abide by the conditions of the order requiring a number of actions to ensure the NRC's concerns will be addressed. Some of the commitments include: enhancing the behavioral observation program procedure at all Exelon nuclear plants; providing training to

company staff on the revision; evaluating the effectiveness of the training; and developing a presentation of the facts and lessons learned from this incident to be presented at industry forums.

Exelon agreed to address these issues according to the timelines established in the order and to notify the NRC in writing upon completion of specific actions.

The orders to Buhrman and Brittain prohibit them from participating in NRC-licensed activities due to the NRC's lack of confidence that they can meet the agency's safety requirements. The orders state, "This action is necessary to provide the NRC with reasonable assurance that the protection of public health and safety will not be compromised by your involvement in NRC-licensed activities."

The NRC's confirmatory order to [Exelon](#), orders to [Buhrman](#) and [Brittain](#), and the [letter](#) summarizing the results of the NRC's investigation will be available on the [NRC's website](#) .