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## Mass. power plant inadvertently sends alerts to Hudson Valley

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BUCHANAN — A Massachusetts nuclear plant's efforts to improve its warning system startled Hudson Valley emergency officials when a computer accidentally faxed blank radiological advisories to the four counties around Indian Point.

The event was quickly determined not to be an actual emergency, but the Nuclear Regulatory Commission wants to ensure that the glitch doesn't happen again.

Emergency officials at the Pilgrim nuclear plant in Plymouth, Mass., run by Indian Point owner Entergy Nuclear Northeast, checked out their sister plant's emergency-alert software about 5 p.m. Tuesday to see whether it might work there.

Indian Point is in the final stages of installing a \$15 million emergency siren system that has missed two deadlines and cost the company \$130,000 in fines.

Pilgrim officials tried out what they thought was a demonstration version of the software being deployed in the Hudson Valley, Indian Point officials said yesterday, but quickly found out that they had Indian Point's actual software when the computer sent emergency faxes to Westchester, Rockland, Putnam and Orange counties as well as to New York state - more than 200 miles away.

"They wanted to see if this program would work for them and they pushed the button, but the default settings were for Indian Point," said Neil Sheehan of the NRC. "Guess where the faxes ended up? In the counties surrounding Indian Point."

Local officials said they paused for a moment but took no action because the faux faxes didn't contain wind speed and direction or any of the other data they would have in a real radiological emergency.

"It didn't concern me because the (emergency telephone) line didn't ring, but I spoke with Entergy four times and our IT department ... to make sure that this wasn't somebody's first attempt to hack into the system," said Anthony Sutton, Westchester's commissioner of emergency services. "It took me 10 to 15 seconds to know the document wasn't right. But let's face it, if it had a little more information on it and it had come at 3 a.m., these things can take on a life of their own."

Sutton said initially Entergy officials had asked for county computer experts to help determine the source of the faxes and were contacting state police officials. That concern evaporated when the Massachusetts plant was found to be the source.

C.J. Miller, spokeswoman for Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef, said that though the faxes didn't trigger a massive emergency response, any error in the world of nuclear power is cause for concern.

"Any time you get an alert from Indian Point, of course you want it to be a false alarm," Miller said. "As relieved as we were to find out it was nothing, this is illustrative of an ongoing management issue that apparently goes beyond the Buchanan plant."

Though the situation quickly turned out not to be serious, NRC officials said yesterday that they would ensure that both plants took corrective actions so the event was not repeated.

"This is obviously a situation you don't want to see occur," Sheehan said. "They need to address it so it doesn't happen again in the future."

Jim Steets, the Entergy spokesman for both plants, said the company should have shared a generic copy of the software with the Pilgrim plant, which just wanted to see what the features of the computer program were.

"When they pushed the button (at Pilgrim), they had no idea they were sending faxes to the counties down here," Steets said. "They didn't know it was a working program."

On Monday morning, a faulty water valve on the steam generators at Indian Point 2 caused workers to take the nuclear reactor down to 2 percent of its full power and off the state's power grid. Company officials hope to return it to full electricity production by the weekend.

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