iridium-192 sources. (The cobalt-60 source and two iridium-192 sources are used almost every day. The five remaining iridium-192 sources are in storage.) In citing the violation, the NRC credited the Licensee with having complied with the inventory requirement for the three sources that are in virtually daily use and cited the Licensee for failing to conduct the quarterly inventory of the sealed sources that were in storage.

The Licensee copied four records onto the first page attached to the February 19, 1996 letter and represented those copies as examples of inventory records. None of the records list the source by serial number or indicate the date the inventory was made. Therefore, with the exception of the record for one cobalt-60 source, the records submitted with the Licensee's February 19, 1996 letter do not show that an inventory was made and cannot be used in evaluating the Licensee's response to the NOV.

The second page attached to the Licensee's February 19, 1996 letter shows three sealed sources by serial number and isotope were inventoried on June 10, 1994. The NRC considered that inventory while assessing the violation and did not cite the Licensee for that inventory. Rather, the cited violation was for the quarterly inventories that were not performed from June 11, 1994, to the September 1995 inspection. The Licensee's February 19, 1996 letter did not provide any information to show that quarterly inventories were made from June 11, 1994, to September 11, 1995.

NRC Conclusion

The Licensee has not provided an adequate basis for withdrawal of the violation. Therefore, NRC concludes that the violation occurred as stated in the Notice.

[FR Doc. 96–9666 Filed 4–18–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

Commonwealth Edison Company; LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2; Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact

[Docket Nos. 50–373 and 50–374]

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an exemption from certain requirements of its regulations to Facility Operating License Nos. NPF–11 and NPF–18, issued to Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd, the licensee), for operation of the LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2, located in LaSalle County, Illinois.

Environmental Assessment

Identification of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is in accordance with the licensee's application dated February 20, 1996, for an exemption from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55, ''Requirements for Physical Protection of Licensed Activities in Nuclear Power Reactors Against Radiological Sabotage.'' The requested exemption would allow the implementation of a hand geometry biometric system of site access control in conjunction with photograph identification badges and would allow the badges to be taken off site.

The Need for the Proposed Action

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55(a), the licensee is required to establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization.

In 10 CFR 73.55(d), ''Access Requirements,'' it specifies in part that ''The licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area.'' In 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), it specifies in part that ''A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort.'' It further indicates that an individual not employed by the licensee (e.g., contractors) may be authorized access to protected areas without an escort provided the individual, ''receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area.''

Currently, unescorted access for both employee and contractor personnel into the LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2, is controlled through the use of picture badges. Positive identification of personnel who are authorized and request access into the protected areas is established by security personnel making a visual comparison of the individual requesting access and that individual's picture badge. The picture badges are issued, stored, and retrieved at the entrance/exit location to the protected area. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor personnel are not allowed to take their picture badges off site. In addition, in accordance with the plant's physical security plan, the licensee's employees are also not allowed to take their picture badges off site. The licensee proposes to implement an alternative unescorted access control system which would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve picture badges at the entrance/exit location to the protected area. The proposal would also allow contractors who have unescorted access to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the LaSalle site. In addition, the site security plans will be revised to allow implementation of the hand geometry system and to allow employees and contractors with unescorted access to keep their picture badges in their possession when leaving the LaSalle site.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Commission has completed its evaluation of the proposed action and concludes that the proposed exemption would not increase the probability or consequences of accidents previously analyzed and would not affect facility radiation levels or facility radiological effluents. Under the proposed system, all individuals with authorized unescorted access will have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their picture badge number in a computerized access control system in addition to their picture badges. Therefore, all authorized individuals must not only have their picture badges to gain access into the protected area, but must also have their hand geometry confirmed.

All other access processes, including search function capability and access revocation, will remain the same. A security officer responsible for access control will continue to be positioned within a bullet-resistant structure. The proposed system is only for individuals with authorized unescorted access and will not be used for individuals requiring escorts.

The underlying purpose for requiring that individuals not employed by the licensee must receive and return their picture badges at the entrance/exit is to provide reasonable assurance that the access badges could not be compromised or stolen with a resulting risk that an unauthorized individual could potentially enter the protected area. Although the proposed exemption will allow individuals to take their picture badges off site, the proposed measures require not only that the picture badge be provided for access to the protected area, but also that verification of the hand geometry registered with the badge be performed as discussed above. Thus, the proposed system provides an identity verification process that is equivalent to the existing process.

The change will not increase the probability or consequences of accidents, no changes are being made in the types of any effluents that may be released offsite, and there is no significant increase in the allowable individual or cumulative occupational radiation exposure. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant radiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

With regard to potential nonradiological impacts, the proposed action does involve features located entirely within the restricted area as

defined in 10 CFR Part 20. It does not affect nonradiological plant effluents and has no other environmental impact. Accordingly, the Commission concludes that there are no significant nonradiological environmental impacts associated with the proposed action.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Since the Commission has concluded there is no measurable environmental impact associated with the proposed action, any alternatives with equal or greater environmental impact need not be evaluated. The principal alternative to the proposed action would be to deny the requested action. Denial of the requested action would not significantly enhance the environment in that the proposed action will result in a process that is equivalent to the existing identification verification process.

Alternative Use of Resources

This action does not involve the use of resources not previously considered in connection with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Final Environmental Statement dated November 1978, related to the operation of the LaSalle County Station, Units 1 and 2.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

In accordance with its stated policy, on March 22, 1996, the NRC staff consulted with the Illinois State official, Mr. Frank Niziolek, Head, Reactor Safety Section, Division of Engineering, Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety, regarding the environmental impact of the proposed action. The State official had no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the foregoing environmental assessment, the Commission concludes that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, the Commission has determined not to prepare an environmental impact statement for the proposed action.

For further details with respect to the proposed action, see the licensee's letter dated February 20, 1996, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Jacobs Memorial Library, Illinois Valley Community College, Oglesby Illinois 61348.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 16th day of April, 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Donna M. Skay,

Project Manager, Project Directorate III–2, Division of Reactor Projects—III/IV, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 96–9668 Filed 4–18–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

Issuance of Bulletin; NRC Bulletin 96–02, Movement of Heavy Loads Over Spent Fuel, Over Fuel in the Reactor Core, or Over Safety-Related Equipment

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of issuance.

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued NRC Bulletin 96–02 to holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors to verify that licensees are complying with the current licensing basis for each of their facilities with respect to the proper handling and control of heavy loads at nuclear power plants when the plant is operating (in all modes other than cold shutdown, refueling and defueled). The issuance of this bulletin is justified on the basis of the need to ensure compliance with the current licensing basis regarding the weight of heavy loads being moved over spent fuel, over fuel in the reactor core, or over safety-related equipment, and the potentially severe consequences that can result if a load is dropped. Although this bulletin is particularly concerned with heavy load movements while the reactor is operating, the NRC staff is considering further generic actions on the issue of handling heavy loads both while the reactor is operating and during shutdown. This bulletin is available in the NRC Public Document Room under accession number 9604080259. This bulletin is discussed in Commission information paper SECY–96–073 which is also available in the NRC Public Document Room.

DATES: The bulletin was issued on April 11, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Not applicable.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brian E. Thomas, (301) 415–1210 (or Internet:BET@NRC.GOV).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NRC has determined that some licensees have engaged in, or are planning to engage in, heavy load handling activities that may not be within the current licensing basis of their respective facilities. As defined in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, under Section 50.59(c), if an activity is found to involve an unreviewed safety question, an application for a license amendment must be filed with the Commission pursuant to 10 CFR 50.90. Consequently, the NRC has requested that holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors review their plans and capabilities for handling heavy loads in accordance with existing regulatory guidelines, determine whether the activities are within their licensing basis as previously analyzed in the final safety analysis report (and, as appropriate, submit a license amendment request), and determine whether changes to Technical Specifications will be required. All licensees that are planning to implement activities involving the handling of heavy loads during reactor operation (i.e., other than when the reactor is in cold shutdown, refueling or defueled), within the next 2 years from the date of this bulletin, are required to submit a report that addresses the information requested above, and to submit license amendment requests 6–9 months in advance of the planned heavy load movements to give the NRC sufficient time to perform an appropriate safety review.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 11th day of April, 1996.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Dennis M. Crutchfield,

Director, Division of Program Management, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 96–9667 Filed 4–18–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Rel. No. IC–21894; File No. 812–9970]

Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa, et al.

April 15, 1996.

AGENCY: Securities and Exchange Commission (''SEC'' or ''Commission'').

ACTION: Notice of Application for Exemption under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the ''1940 Act'').

APPLICANTS: Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa (''Equitable'') and Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa Separate Account A (the ''Account'').

RELEVANT 1940 ACT SECTIONS: Order requested pursuant to Section 26(b) of the 1940 Act approving the proposed substitution of securities and pursuant to Section 17(b) of the 1940 Act exempting the proposed transaction from the provisions of Section 17(a) of the 1940 Act.