

Fermi nuke plant used wrong test for years

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The U.S.-based Union of Concerned Scientists says the Fermi Nuclear Power Plant near Detroit used the wrong backup systems safety test for 20 years.

The UCS says it documented multiple failures during the two decades to detect a flaw in an emergency backup diesel generator safety test at the plant.

The organization says backup generators are one of a nuclear power plant's most important safety features since they provide backup electricity during off-site power outages and brownouts.

After discovering the problem last November, the UCS said the Nuclear Regulatory Commission levied no fines, failed to ask Detroit Edison for an explanation and failed to require the utility to fix the flawed safety processes that enabled plant workers to perform the test inaccurately for 20 years.

Dave Lochbaum of the UCS's nuclear safety program said, "This may not be the most useless agency sanction over the last 50 years but it's likely in the top five."

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