



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

NUCLEAR SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has received a number of calls from reporters working on stories marking the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of last September 11.

The attached fact sheet provides a summary of the measures NRC has mandated to increase the security of the 103 operational nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities. Also described are enhancements of security at NRC facilities.

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FACT SHEET

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Nuclear Security Enhancements Since Sept. 11, 2001

Licensee Security

-- The NRC took security seriously well before the September 11 terrorist attacks and has made additional enhancements since then in light of the increased threat. Enhancements of security at NRC-licensed facilities are being continually implemented notwithstanding that facilities such as nuclear power plants already had a number of security and safeguards measures in place, making them among the most robust and well protected civilian facilities in the country.

-- Following the September 11 attacks, the NRC immediately advised all major licensees of nuclear facilities to go to the highest level of security. A series of Advisories, Orders and Regulatory Issue Summaries have since been issued to further strengthen security of NRC-licensed facilities and control of nuclear materials.

-- The specific actions are sensitive, but generally include requirements for increased patrols, augmentation of the number and capabilities of security guards, additional security posts, installation of additional physical barriers, vehicle checks at greater stand-off distances, enhanced coordination with law enforcement and military authorities, and more restrictive site access controls for personnel.

-- The NRC has underway a comprehensive review of the agency's entire safeguards and security program, regulations and procedures. The review is ongoing and has resulted in numerous security improvements.

-- The NRC has studies underway to investigate potential vulnerabilities of facilities to deliberate aircraft crashes. The work in this area is ongoing. In the interim, the Commission has directed nuclear power plant licensees to develop specific plans and strategies to respond to an event that could potentially result in damage to large areas of their plants from explosions or fire. In addition, licensees must provide assurance that their emergency planning resources are sufficient to respond to such an event.

-- The NRC has worked with the Federal Aviation Administration on a Notice to Airmen to prohibit planes from circling or loitering above nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities.

-- Additional measures have been put in place to provide additional protection against land attacks, including the use of a substantial vehicle bomb, and against water-borne attacks.

-- The Commission is working closely with other Federal agencies to revise the design basis threat that provides the foundation for the security programs of nuclear power plant licensees. The Commission's Orders to these licensees in February 2002 effectively provide enhanced security in the interim while this work is underway.

-- The NRC has expanded involvement and enhanced liaison with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, other intelligence and law enforcement agencies, NRC licensees, and military, State and local authorities.

-- The NRC has established an ongoing dialogue through frequent communications with the Office of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies.

-- Following the 9/11 attacks, NRC-evaluated security exercises were temporarily suspended to allow licensees to focus on putting increased security measures into place. NRC has reinitiated these drills by initially exercising the table top component of the exercises that for the first time involve a wide array of Federal, State and local law enforcement and emergency planning officials. The NRC expects to expand the exercises to include a force-on-force component at the beginning of next year.

-- Full security performance reviews, including force-on-force exercises, will be carried out at each nuclear power plant on a three-year cycle instead of the eight-year cycle that had been used prior to September 11, 2001.

-- The NRC has developed an inter-agency response procedure involving the Department of Energy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, among others, to cope with the threat of a radiological dispersal device. In this role, the NRC would provide technical advice to local authorities responsible for emergency response, including suggestions for protective measures, and evaluation of the radiological hazards.

-- The NRC is evaluating approaches for "cradle-to-grave" control of radioactive sources which might be used in a radiological dispersal device.

-- With regard to the shipment of radioactive materials and spent fuel, NRC has augmented security measures, including increased communications and additional escort and monitoring provisions.

-- The NRC has increased staffing of its Headquarters Emergency Operations Center to provide a cadre of experts on call to respond to emergencies around the clock, 7 days a week. The additional staff aids in the prompt dissemination of pertinent information to all concerned, including licensees, Federal and State officials.

-- The NRC established the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR) in April of this year to consolidate security, safeguards and incident response responsibilities and resources and improve communication and coordination both internal and external to the agency.

-- The creation of NSIR streamlines decision-making, improves the timeliness and consistency of information, and provides a more visible point of contact and effective counterpart to the Office of Homeland Security, as well as other Federal agencies.

-- The NRC has developed a new Threat Advisory and Protective Measures System to communicate and respond to threats affecting NRC licensees and NRC facilities in response to Homeland Security Presidential Directive. The system corresponds to the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System which provides a consistent national framework for allowing government officials to communicate the nature and degree of terrorist threats. The NRC system identifies specific actions to be taken by NRC licensees for each threat level to counter projected terrorist threats. The new Threat Advisory and Protective Measures System replaces the NRC's 1998 threat advisory system and covers additional classes of licensees not included in NRC's 1998 system.

Security at NRC

-- On September 11, Chairman Meserve will deliver remarks to NRC staff in tribute to those who died in the attacks, as well as to their bereaved families and friends. NRC staff will observe a one-minute period of silence at 8:45 a.m. that morning, the time of the first airplane strike at the World Trade Center.

-- In addition, a host of enhanced security measures were put in place at NRC Headquarters, including the installation of concrete vehicle barriers, increased armed guards, more stringent access procedures and ongoing intra-agency communications to keep all NRC employees informed of the latest developments. Security was also bolstered at NRC regional offices.

--The NRC conducted a comprehensive review and revision of its web site to remove sensitive information which could be of interest to terrorists, while it continued to provide the public with appropriate material on the NRC and its activities.

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