



NRC NEWS

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NRC ORDERS NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS TO ENHANCE FACILITY ACCESS AUTHORIZATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued Orders to all 103 operating commercial nuclear power plants requiring that licensees enhance their authorization programs for individuals to gain facility access.

Some of the requirements formalize a series of security measures that NRC licensees had taken in response to advisories issued by the NRC in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Additional security enhancements, which have emerged from the comprehensive security review, are also provided in the Orders.

The specific security measures addressed by the Orders, which supplement existing regulatory requirements, are sensitive. The measures generally include restricting temporary unescorted access to a facility and re-verifying background investigation criteria for those individuals with unescorted access. In addition, the measures require that licensees share critical background investigations with other licensees.

The Orders are effective immediately and will remain in effect until the Commission determines otherwise.

Licensees are required to provide NRC with a schedule for achieving full compliance within 20 days. Licensees must also notify NRC within 20 days, and justify in writing, if they are unable to comply with any of these requirements of the Order, if compliance with any requirement is deemed unnecessary in their specific circumstances, or if the implementation of any requirement would cause the licensee to be in violation of provisions of any Commission regulation or the facility license, or adversely impact safe operation of the facility.

Immediately after the September 11 attacks, the NRC advised all of the nation's nuclear power plants and other key nuclear facilities to go to the highest level of security, which they promptly did.

Specific measures were subsequently defined in a number of advisories, and have been subject to audit by NRC security experts. The NRC is continuing to coordinate with other Federal and State agencies on protection of critical infrastructure within the U.S.

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