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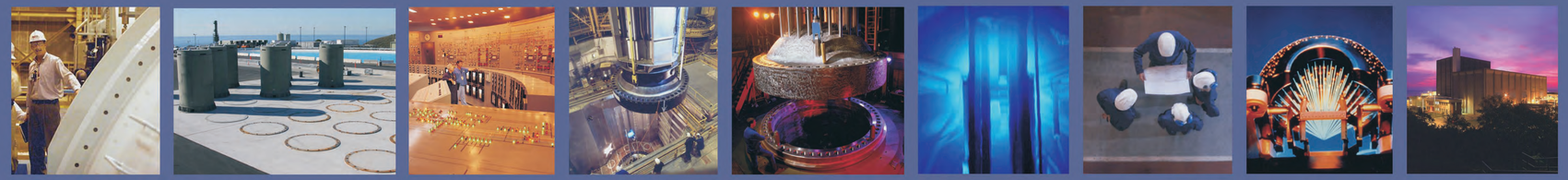


OFFICE OF NUCLEAR SECURITY & INCIDENT RESPONSE

Enhancements to the Access Authorization Program for Nuclear Power Plants

History

On May 29, 1991, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) published Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) 73.56, "Personnel Access Authorization Requirements for Nuclear Power Plants" (56 Federal Register 24239), to support the safe operation of nuclear power plants licensed by the agency. Regulations in 10 CFR 73.57, "Requirements for Criminal History Records Checks of Individuals Granted Unescorted Access to a Nuclear Power Facility or Access to Safeguards Information," and10 CFR Part 26, "Fitness-for-Duty Programs," implemented parts of this rule.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the NRC increased emphasis on the trustworthiness and reliability of individuals who have unescorted access to the protected and vital areas of nuclear power plants.

Recognizing the new threat environment, the NRC began comprehensive reviews of its safeguards and security programs to ensure that the existing requirements were reasonable and prudent. After completing these reviews, the agency issued advisories and security orders to enhance the control of personnel access to nuclear power plants and the monitoring their movement within these facilities. On February 25, 2002, the NRC issued orders to all nuclear power plant licensees that require them to formally implement certain enhancements in previous advisories. On January 7, 2003, the NRC issued an additional security order (EA-02-0261) to all licensees under 10 CFR Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," effective immediately, imposing compensatory measures to enhance the access authorization (AA) program established under 10 CFR 73.56. The order allowed for an implementation period commensurate with the complexity of the enhancement.

In Staff Requirements Memorandum COMSECY-04-0047, "Status of Security-Related Rulemaking," dated July 19, 2004, the Commission approved the staff's plans to amend the requirements in 10 CFR Part 73, "Physical Protection of Plants and Materials," to achieve regulatory stability, increase program effectiveness, clarify existing regulatory requirements among stakeholders, and codify the requirements in one location.

Purpose

The licensee for each nuclear power plant licensed under 10 CFR Part 50 is required to develop, implement, and maintain an AA program to protect against an *insider* threat at the plant. The purpose of an AA program is to demonstrate that each person granted unescorted access to the facility meets the following criteria:

- is trustworthy and reliable
- does not constitute an unreasonable risk to public health and safety or the common defense and security
- does not pose a threat to interrupt the normal operation of the plant or commit sabotage

Scope of Requirements

The requirements for an AA program apply to each nuclear power plant licensee under 10 CFR Part 50, including its contractors, subcontractors, and vendors.

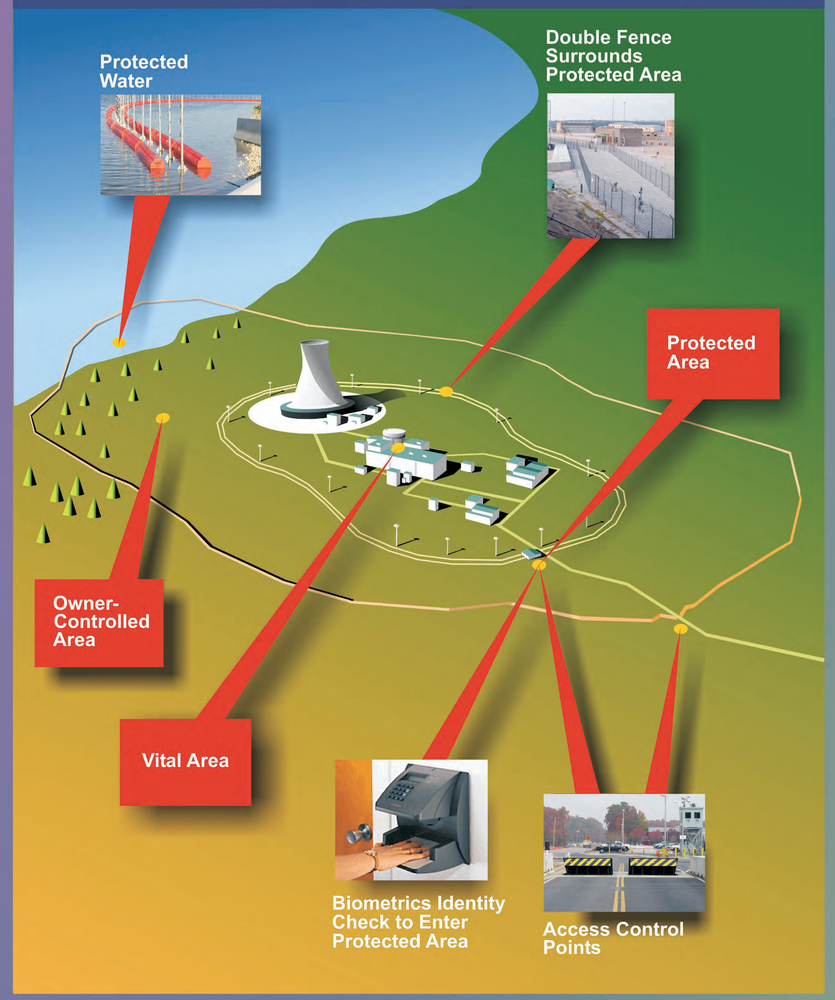
The licensee must implement an AA program that follows an approved NRC security plan and the requirements in 10 CFR Part 73 and 10 CFR Part 26. These rules require the licensee to perform the following reviews and screenings of each person granted unescorted access to an NRC-licensed nuclear plant:

- employment history review (including all periods of unemployment)
- military history review
- criminal history review
- credit history review
- education history review
- interviews with provided references
- drug and alcohol screening
- psychological screening

The rules also require that each person granted unescorted access be observed by a supervisor trained to detect, at a minimum, changes in behavior that could indicate degraded or impaired performance.

Initial followup and random drug testing of personnel are major components of the NRC's program to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of licensee personnel who have unescorted access to the protected and vital areas in a nuclear power plant.

Enhancements to the AA Program



Defense-in-Depth Strategy

Criminal History Program

Individuals who request unescorted access to U.S. nuclear power plants or access to Safeguards Information must be fingerprinted and must undergo a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) check of their criminal history record. The FBI criminal history check must be updated every 5 years to maintain the individual's unescorted access privileges, or every 3 years if he or she is assigned to a critical group job.

Behavioral Observation Program

The NRC requires the licensees of nuclear power plants to have a behavioral observation program. This program is designed to detect behaviors or activities that may constitute an unreasonable risk to public health and safety and the common defense and security, such as a potential threat to commit radiological sabotage. Employees may be offered counseling if they have problems performing their jobs or exhibit aberrant behavior. Similarly, anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol is immediately removed from the work area for evaluation under the licensee's fitness-for-duty program. Currently, the nuclear power industry is voluntarily updating the behavioral observation program guidance followed by nuclear power plant licensees to include behaviors that could mean an individual is becoming radicalized.

Insider Mitigation Program

The insider mitigation program (IMP) for nuclear power plants uses elements of the AA, fitness-for-duty, and behavioral observation programs. The IMP helps ensure that people who have unescorted access to an NRC-licensed facility do not pose an insider threat. The term "insider threat" refers to the possibility that a person with authorized access to vital areas of a facility could use that access to damage or sabotage the facility or assist an outside adversary to do so. The IMP strategy assigns different levels of access based on an individual's need to enter certain areas of the plant. These programs are essential to the overall security of nuclear power plants.

The Access Authorization Program for Nuclear Power Plants

The NRC continually examines the AA program and works with its Federal partners to improve the program using new ideas and technology. The AA requirements now include the following:

- security screening for people who have electronic access to information systems that involve facility safety, security, or emergency preparedness
- enhanced psychological assessments
- increased information sharing among reactor licensees
- expanded behavioral observation
- periodic reinvestigations of criminal and credit-history records for all individuals with unescorted access
- psychological reassessment every 5 years for certain critical job functions

Contact Information and Additional Resources

More information on AA programs can be found on the NRC's public Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/fitness-for-duty.html

or by contacting the NRC's access authorization program team at Accessauthorization.Resource@NRC.gov

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