

Coordination and Communications

The NRC doesn't stand alone in protecting its licensees. The NRC and DHS coordinate resources and work together in today's threat environment. One tangible example is the recently issued National Infrastructure Protection Plan, which, when coupled with the Nuclear Sector Specific Plan and National Response Plan, facilitates the sharing of information and provides for a coordinated, comprehensive response to threats and events. Federally integrated response is also illustrated by DHS's decision to begin infrastructure reviews in the nuclear sector, making it a model for future reviews of security at other critical industries. The Comprehensive Review initiative (a DHS-led program to evaluate national critical infrastructure protection capabilities) integrates a full range of security, law enforcement and emergency preparedness professionals to identify strengths and potential weaknesses of the nation's critical infrastructure and key resources. Nuclear power plants were identified as an initial area for review because of the high level of planning already in place, and all plants have either been reviewed or are scheduled to be reviewed in the next year.

The NRC has also developed a Threat Advisory and Protective Measures System that corresponds to the color-coded Homeland Security Advisory System. The NRC system identifies specific actions to be considered by NRC licensees for each threat level to counter projected terrorist threats. If a credible threat emerges against a specific nuclear facility, additional protective measures may be mandated even without a change in the overall threat level.

The timely sharing of accurate information among the NRC, other federal agencies and the nuclear industry is critical to preventing or mitigating the effects of terrorist attacks. NRC staffs are assigned to the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, the National Counterterrorism Center and the DHS Infrastructure Protection Office to support the integrated assessment of security-related information. The NRC Operations Center, located in the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md., provides an around-the-clock conduit for disseminating information and coordinating response, and NRC's highly-trained specialists review intelligence and threat-related information from a range of sources in order to assess suspicious activity related to its licensees. Secure communications systems also allow the NRC to communicate with nuclear regulators in other countries.

The NRC has always been committed to open communication with the public. However, since September 11th, the NRC realized that security-related information it routinely made public could possibly aid potential adversaries seeking to steal or divert radioactive materials or attack or sabotage a nuclear power plant. With that reality, NRC revised its information dissemination policy, and the public is provided only limited information on regulatory decisions or actions involving security inspection, assessment or enforcement. The Commission regularly reassesses this policy and in mid-2006 began making certain results of its security inspection program for nuclear power plants available to the public. The NRC has also initiated a series of annual public meetings on security and emergency

preparedness, allowing the flow of some information to external stakeholders and the public without jeopardizing national security.

Source: Nuclear Regulatory Commission

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/security-enhancements.html>