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Tel. 301/504-2240

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NRC AMENDS WEAPONS QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENTS  
FOR SECURITY PERSONNEL

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is upgrading its regulations for certain nuclear fuel facilities to require the facilities' armed security force personnel to qualify for daytime weapons firing according to new criteria.

Tactical response team members, armed response personnel and guards at fuel cycle facilities possessing formula quantities of strategic special nuclear material (known as Category I licenses) will be required to qualify and annually requalify for use of their assigned weapons using new day firing qualification courses.

The modifications to existing day firing qualification courses are needed to enhance proficiency in weapon manipulation skills, such as reloading and changing positions while firing. The current requirements are oriented more toward marksmanship, which were appropriate at the time they were specified, but the NRC has developed an increased awareness of the evolution of the capabilities and tactics employed by criminal and terrorist elements. The weapons manipulation skills in addition to marksmanship are considered to provide a significant improvement in the ability of licensee security forces to survive a confrontation.

A proposed rule on this subject was published in the Federal Register for public comment on December 13, 1991. Revisions made as a result of comments received are described in a Federal Register notice published on August 31, 1993.

The December 13 notice also contained proposed requirements for physical fitness programs for security force personnel at the Category I facilities. The NRC has decided to make substantive changes to these requirements and will republish them separately as a proposed rule and seek additional public comment.

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