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Secretary
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
DOCKETING & SERVICE
BRANCH

Attention: Docketing and Services Branch

Gentlemen:

DOCKET NUMBER
PROPOSED RULE PR 73
(62 FR 7721)

Subject: VIRGIL C. SUMMER NUCLEAR STATION
DOCKET NO. 50/395
OPERATING LICENSE NO. NPF-12
COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RULE
CHANGES TO NUCLEAR POWER PLANT
SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

South Carolina Electric and Gas Company (SCE&G) hereby provides comments on a proposed rule to change nuclear power plant security requirements contained in 10 CFR 73.55(d)(4) as discussed in the Federal Register, February 20, 1997 (Volume 62, Number 34).

Attached are comments on three of the five changes being addressed in this proposed rulemaking. The areas discussed are:

1. Search requirements for on-duty guards, Section 73.55(d)(1)
2. Requirements for vehicle escort, Section 73.55 (d)(4)
3. Key controls for vital areas, Section 73.55(d)(8)

Should you have any questions, please call me or have a member of your staff call Mr. Ricky Myers at (803) 345-4384, at your convenience.

Very truly yours,


Gary J. Taylor

RAM
attachment

c: J. L. Skolds	W.F. Conway	NSRC
R. R. Mahan	R. J. White	RTS (PR 970003)
H. L. O'Quinn	L. A. Reyes	DMS
NRC Resident Inspector	J. B. Knotts Jr.	File (811.02)

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ACKNOWLEDGED BY CARD
MAY 09 1997

Section 73.55(d)(1)

At Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station (VCSNS) weapons are issued to armed security guards reporting for duty outside the protected area. The proposed rule is limited to "reentry" and would still require these guards to remove their weapon to pass through the detector or be subject to a hand search for entry into the protected area.

Further, at VCSNS, the lunch room is outside the protected area. The proposed rule is limited to guards "on official business." Again an armed guard would be required to remove their weapon to pass through the Detector or be subject to a hand search for entry into the protected area upon returning from the lunch room.

As recognized in the discussion of your proposal, "Because an armed guard carries a weapon on site, passage of the guard through the metal detector...serves little purpose." Potential for personnel safety risk by the unnecessary removing and handling the guard's weapon still exists within the proposed change. SCE&G suggests the final rule be worded as follows:

(1) The licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area. Identification and search of all individuals unless otherwise provided herein must be made and authorization must be checked at these points. The search function for the detection of firearms, explosives, and incendiary devices must be accomplished through the use of both firearms and explosive detection equipment capable of detecting those devices. The licensee shall subject all persons except bona fide Federal, State, and local law enforcement personnel and armed security guards who are on official duty to these equipment searches upon entry into a protected area.

Section 73.55(d)(4)

Certain elements contained in this proposal remain too prescriptive, have a small effect on safety, are costly to implement, and restrict operational flexibility. The proposed rule could become even more restrictive than the current 10 CFR 73.55(d)(4) which states:

"...All vehicles, except designated licensee vehicles, requiring entry into the protected area shall be escorted by a member of the security organization while within the protected area..." and "... The licensee shall exercise positive control over all such vehicles to assure that **they are used only by authorized persons** and for authorized purposes..."

We can currently allow contract personnel authorized unescorted access to operate designated vehicles. Please change the rule to allow any searched vehicle requiring entry into the protected area be either driven by an individual who has been granted

unescorted access while within the PA or be escorted by a member of the security organization.

SCE&G suggests the final rule be worded as follows:

(4) All vehicles, except under emergency conditions, must be searched for items which could be used for sabotage purposes prior to entry into the protected area. Vehicle areas to be searched include the cab, engine compartment, undercarriage, and cargo area. All vehicles must be driven by an individual authorized unescorted access inside the protected area or be escorted by a member of the security organization while within the protected area and, to the extent practical, must be off loaded in the protected area at a specific designated material receiving area that is not adjacent to a vital area.

The proposed change will allow the utility to shift resources from activities that have a small effect on safety to those that more significantly enhance safety.

The conduct of a vehicle search and the establishment of driver/escort reliability and trustworthiness are the key elements to provide a high assurance against radiological sabotage. The conduct of a vehicle search will remain in effect and is not altered by this request. Reliability and trustworthiness has been established for an individual granted unescorted access to the PA through the successful completion of a background investigation, criminal history check, psychological assessment, and pre-access drug and alcohol tests. Reliability and trustworthiness are maintained through a behavioral observation program as well as random drug and alcohol tests per the utility's Fitness for Duty Program in accordance with 10 CFR Part 26.

Section 73.55(d)(9)

Please remove or define the words "inadequate work performance". This term is used to specify an event where an individual's unescorted access is revoked and requires keys, locks, combinations, and related access control devices to which that person had access must be changed. Nothing about the quality of an employee's work suggests the individual would conduct an act of mischievous conduct or vandalism. The requirement to change out keys and locks would only assist the station if the individual was to illegally gain access to the protected area.

CONCLUSION

SCE&G request the NRC incorporate these comments which will not result in a decrease in the utility's ability to protect the health and safety of the public with a high degree of assurance against the threat of radiological sabotage.